

arts in society

WINTER 1959



*Editorial Policy*

ARTS IN SOCIETY is dedicated to the advancement of education in the arts, particularly in the field of adult education. These publications are to be of interest, therefore, to both professionals and the intelligent lay public. ARTS IN SOCIETY discusses, interprets, and illustrates the various roles of the arts in contemporary society. In general, four areas are dealt with: the teaching and learning of the arts; aesthetics and philosophy; social analysis; and significant examples of creative expression in media which may be served by the printing process.

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*Cover by Bob Hodgell*

# arts in society

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A Journal of the Arts in Adult Education

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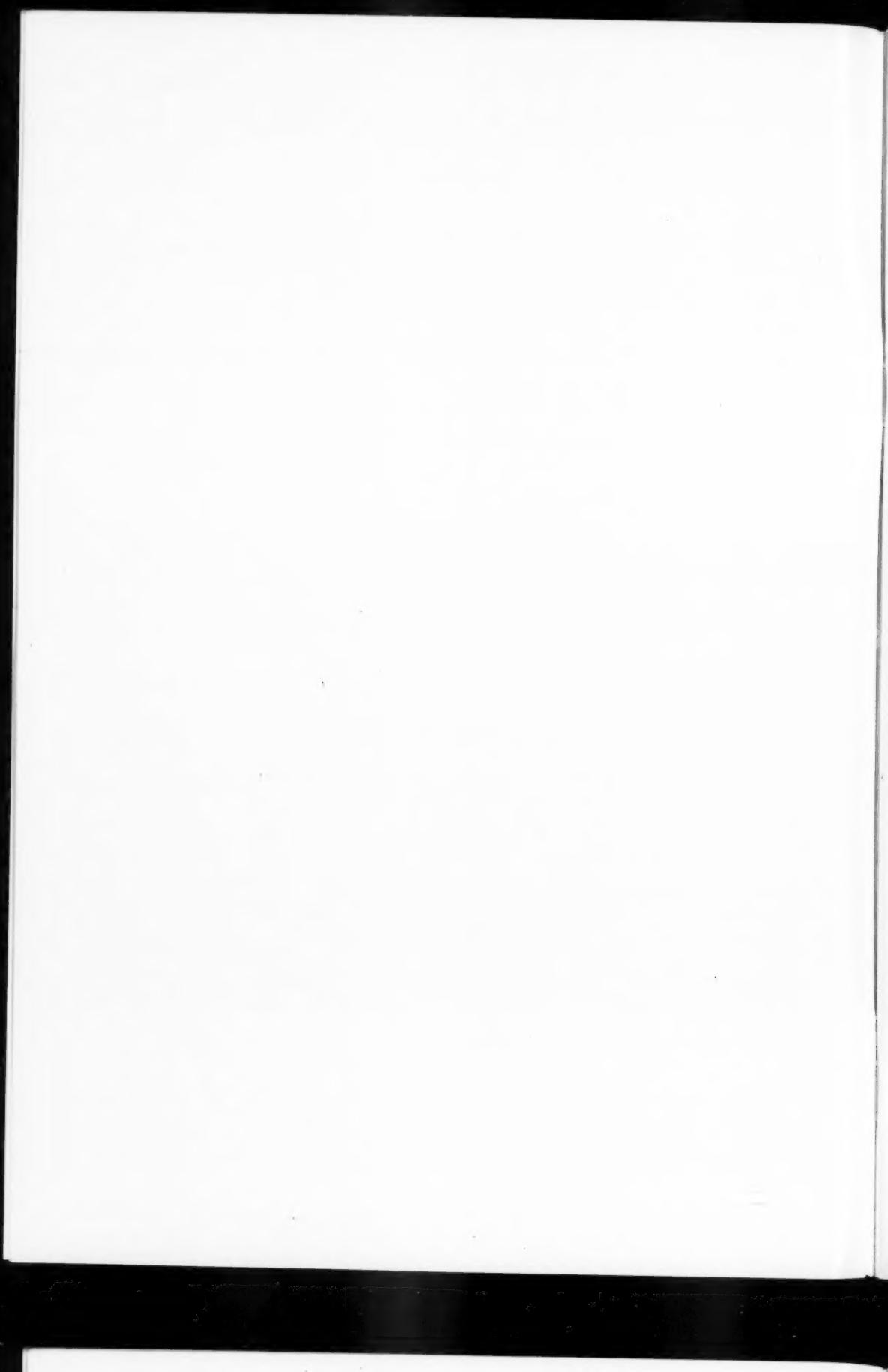
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## Bob Hodgell

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### blockprints



Golgotha



Pilgrim Begins His Journey



The Reminder



Old Ark A'Moverin'



The Supper



The Garden



More than any other living person, August Derleth qualifies for the title of Wisconsin's man-of-letters. He began writing at the age of thirteen and was first published at fifteen. He has continued to wield a pen which has produced in steady stream—poetry, essays, reviews, serious novels, short stories, novelettes, mystery novels, plays, biography, and criticism. His *Sac Prairie Saga*, conceived as a related series of self-contained novels to interpret the history of Sac Prairie, Wisconsin, from 1800 to 1950, has proven to many that a writer is able to maintain his roots without running out of inspiration. A monument of regionalist literature, it reflects at the same time Mr. Derleth's life-long study of other regionalists and a profound respect for the Middlewestern scene. In the present article, especially prepared for *Arts in Society*, the "Sage of the Sac" explains his personal relations with three of America's best known and loved writers.

## August Derleth

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### three literary men: a memoir of sinclair lewis, sherwood anderson, and edgar lee masters

As a young writer, I was influenced in the direction I took by the work of Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, and Edgar Lee Masters—not equally perhaps, because, as a provincial firmly rooted in a small Midwestern town, I recognized that Lewis's *Main Street* was only the one face of that town of which Zona Gale's *Friendship Village* was the other, and that neither of these portraits was in perspective, however great the merit of Lewis's portrait in contrast to the mawkish sentimentality of Zona Gale's. Anderson and Masters thus had a more profound influence, but there is no denying that Lewis, too, played a role in my formative years.

I corresponded with them over a period of perhaps a decade—with

Lewis desultorily, with Anderson and Masters at greater length during a time when I lectured a kind of course on the subject of American Regional Literature in connection with the Short Course of the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin. I met them, too, at various times in essentially casual meetings, which I set down faithfully in a journal, meetings which left on me an impression not entirely related to the correspondence we conducted.

They are gone now, but a record of those casual meetings remains.

### Sinclair Lewis

I met Sinclair Lewis for the first time in Milwaukee, in November, 1937, at his suggestion. He was in that city to address the state convention of the Wisconsin Education Association; he had read my first serious novel, *Still Is the Summer Night*, on the train from New York, and he wanted to talk to me. I had come down from Sauk City, over a hundred miles from Milwaukee, and gone to Lewis's room at the Schroeder Hotel just before five o'clock in the afternoon. I found him alone: a tall man, growing paunchy, with sharp, appraising eyes. It was apparent within ten minutes that he was still essentially as much of a provincial as I was.

He launched immediately into a theme which recurred throughout the evening—the general lack of recognition given authors by their home states. He intended to talk on this subject to Wisconsin's educators next day. He had brought along novels by Mark Schorer, Sterling North, and Elinor Green, in addition to my own. I urged him also to read the most recent novel by Edward Harris Heth, with whose work he was unfamiliar, and he promised to do so. He said some very kind things about *Still Is the Summer Night*, and suggested that "Sac Prairie" could be made an important place name in American letters. Perhaps Mark Schorer, who also hailed from Sauk City, could be persuaded to use that place name instead of the "Sacton" he had chosen, he suggested. At the same time he contrasted my novel to one of the others he had.

"Your people are real. You believe in them. You sympathize with them. But there isn't a sympathetic character in all of this book," he said, pushing aside another of the novels he had been reading. "Just the same—he can write. The trouble is he doesn't really like people; he's all wrapped up in himself. Now, in your book, the old man, the father of the two boys . . ."

I told him not to praise my novel; I knew where it was satisfactory; I was far more interested in its faults.

"Got an ego, eh?" he said. "A healthy sign. How do you write? I mean—are you alone?—do you have to live with other people? —are you disturbed? How much do you write?"

I told him that for economic reasons I had to write half a million words a year.

He was appalled. He shook his head. "You write too much. Do about 100,000 words a year—cut out the book reviews; they're just a nuisance and a time-waster. Spend at least a year on each book."

I explained that, by and large, I did so, that it was only the writing which took little time.

"What about this Sac Prairie Saga you're writing? Tell me about it."

I told him of my plan to tell the story of a typical Middlewestern village from 1830 to 1950 or thereabouts in a series of novels, novellas, short stories, miscellaneous prose, and poetry. He had grasped the plan in an astonishingly short interlude, even before I had finished talking about it.

"It hasn't been done very much—it's too hard. Balzac has done it," he said, "perhaps the best, and Dickens somewhat. I myself don't

repeat characters very often. George Babbitt turns up in *Dodsworth*, I think."

"*Dodsworth* also appears briefly, if indirectly, in *Babbitt*," I pointed out.

"That so? I'd forgotten."

He seemed pleased to know that I remembered. He took up *Still Is the Summer Night* again and examined the cover design.

"That's a swell job Scribner's did. I mean the cover. I've forgotten the jacket."

I told him I had designed the cover myself, and intended it for all the books which belonged to the Sac Prairie Saga.

"So you did that, too, eh? You seem to have a lot of facets." Then again he shook his head, this time as disapprovingly as before. "But don't do too much. Remember that, Augie. Don't do too much. You can waste a lot of creative energy doing things you needn't do."

He opened his bag. Canby's *Works of Thoreau* lay there. I commented on it.

"Oh, Thoreau's always been a favorite of mine. Used to read him when I was a kid, and he got me into the habit of taking long walks."

He began to talk then of his background—not only of the long walks, but also of Sauk Center, Minnesota—and the lad who emerged from his talk was a shy, sensitive solitary, a homely, gawky boy, who was keenly aware of the social shortcomings he fancied afflicted him, a little resentful against his milieu, but not bitter—the boy who had been very much a part of those meaningful trifles which more than anything else vivify the memory of small town life. This was the

background of *Main Street*, of *Babbitt*. Was he not a deeply lonely boy, perhaps self-isolated, who took refuge in Thoreau and the long walks in the vicinity of Sauk Center, so sensitive that he was afraid of being hurt and avoided any possibility save that of hurting himself? Everything he said lent weight to this conjecture, which was later to become a profound conviction.

But he came back in his monologue to Sac Prairie and to me. He was sincerely interested in me as a young writer. "Look," he seemed to say, "this sort of contact is what I missed dreadfully when I was beginning to write." Now he was doing all in his power to encourage and stimulate the young writers with whom he came in contact. I was only one of many.

Ed Tomlinson came in, filled with anecdotes. He wanted to order something to drink, but Lewis shook his head. "I'm on the wagon," he said.

Photographers and reporters came on Tomlinson's heels. This was the heyday of the candid camera shot, and pictures were taken from every conceivable angle; photographers were lying on the floor and the bed, perched on the bureau, all but hanging from the chandelier, and one came close to doing that. Lewis was no whit concerned with them, except to answer reporters' questions.

He exploded when one of the reporters asked where I was from. "Christ! He doesn't even know where he's from!" he said to Tomlinson. To the reporter he replied, "Don't you know this fellow's already written six books, he lives in Wisconsin, he's always lived here? Do something to let the rest of the state know about him." To Tomlinson he added, "They don't know a first-class writer out here until the rest of the world shoves him down their throats!"

Ironically, only a few moments later, someone came to the door to ask for the autograph of "Mr. Sinclair." Lewis came ruefully back, saying, "Can you beat it? They don't even know my name. They

don't even take the trouble to find it out; they come up here with a slip of paper and expect me to sign it. What do you do about autographs, Augie?"

I said I would sign any book someone was interested enough to buy. "That's right. I'll consider writing my name in it if they buy the book, but otherwise not. We ought to form a protective association with rules for autograph hunters."

The photographers and reporters melted away. Lewis telephoned for dinner to be sent up to us. He asked Ed Tomlinson to join us, but Ed could stay only for soup, since he had to make a train. Soon Lewis and I were alone again, and he turned once more to the subject of my writing.

"If you feel yourself going sour, get out and go somewhere else for a while," he said. "I don't mean to uproot yourself, I mean just to get away for a month or two—or a year. Don't bother about Europe. Go see this country first."

I said I had always believed in seeing this country first. I meant to stay in Sauk City.

"You're right, you're absolutely right; stick to Sauk City. But don't let people get you down there. They can be pretty bad in their meanness and envy and jealousy. Pay no attention to what they say. They don't understand what goes on inside your head, never will. If anyone tells you again you've got to travel to be able to write, there are two words that make the perfect answer—Jane Austen—never went beyond four blocks away from her father's house. If she's dull reading, she's still an English classic."

And what about him? I wanted to know. Why had he left Sauk Center?

"If you had to do it over?"

"I don't know what I'd do."

He was beginning to tire, and I felt he ought to rest. I said as much. He insisted that I stay; so I did stay for another hour. But at nine o'clock I got up determined to go.

"Have you got a place to stay?"

"I'm going back to Sauk City."

"Tonight? Will you be at the lecture tomorrow? I'll get you a card."

"No. I've got too much work to do."

"Even to hear yourself and your work praised," he said, somewhat surprised. "Well—here at last is a writer who writes! Then you already know something a lot of writers find hard to learn—that you have to write, every day, steadily, if you're going to get close to your goals. But I'm afraid you write too much, Augie."

I said I knew I did, but that, since I had no "angel," I had to write too much to keep myself alive. "I never had any illusions about being a genius," I explained, "and I never intended to starve in an attic."

On this note we parted.

I saw him a second time in Madison, Wisconsin, in mid-January of 1939. Once again he had sent for me, this time by means of a short note to tell me that he was bringing his play, *Angela is Twenty-two*, to Madison on the night of the sixteenth and would like to see me backstage after the performance.

I went to see him on stage, but he was not an actor, he was not Dr. Hilary Jerrett; it was quite enough to be Sinclair Lewis.

After the play there was a relatively short visit in his dressing-room. He was being gushed over by several local women as I entered. Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Frank were there, and Lewis introduced us, surprised to learn that we had not met. It was a curious meeting because I had been trying futilely to see Frank informally to discuss with him some of the aspects of his friendship with Zona Gale, whose biography I was then writing for Appleton-Century. At this chance meeting he offered me a flaccid hand and she said, "We've read your book," but could not name one when I asked which. The atmosphere in the dressing-room was somewhat chilly, though eventually everyone went except Lewis, his producer, Jack Wildberg, and myself.

All this time Lewis had been sitting with a smock on, signing programs and books with great rapidity. But he finally came to the end of this and called for more coffee. He turned and asked how I fared. He thanked me for dedicating my Guggenheim novel, *Restless Is the River*, to him, and commented rather wryly that now all the Lewis-haters would vent their spleen on me. (How true this was I discovered later when the distinguished critic, Bernard de Voto, who had openly quarrelled with Lewis and who had some pretensions to writing novels, at which he fared badly, turned the wrath he had for Lewis on me, among other writers upon whom Lewis had smiled.)

I thanked him for continuing to speak out in praise of my work.

"Why not? I believe you can be an important writer. Let them learn to get used to the idea."

He talked briefly about his play. He did not seem to have any illusions. He thought little of himself as an actor, and was planning to step out of his role soon.

Wildberg put in, "He can't sleep past six in the morning, and he's been going since we started at the rate of eighteen to nineteen hours a day in one thing after another."

To this Lewis said, "There's nothing like it. You ought to do a play, Augie. It's like the difference between sculpture and jewel-cutting. A book's like a piece of sculpture, but a play is a jewel. Take down Jack's address; eventually you'll do one."

I said I did not think I would, but he insisted that I take down his producer's address, nevertheless.

"You're writing too much," said Lewis then, returning to the theme of our previous meeting, since by that time the number of my published books had risen to fourteen. "Don't overdo it."

"Look, I want to eat, to sleep without worrying, to get around and hike—I've got to write. I can't count on best-sellers."

"Another solitary walker," said Lewis, laughing.

I said that walking was a necessary relaxation—and not among people.

"How long is it taking you to do a novel, Augie?" Lewis asked.

"Three months."

"Good God! But then, you've got so much more energy than I have; you're stronger than I am."

I asked him how long he took on a novel.

"About a year—with all the research down before, sometimes two, three books ahead. Then I put it away for two weeks or a month, and I can come back to it fresh. When I did *Arrowsmith*, I had a 280,000-word manuscript. I was sick of it. But a month after, I came back to it fresh as a daisy, and I cut it down to 200,000."

I said something that made him laugh. He insisted that I repeat it. I admitted to having said *whom* when I meant *who*, and added, "But think nothing of it."

"Doesn't he sound like Mencken when he says that? Just like him! You sound just like Hank Mencken, Augie!" He turned again to Wildberg and added, "Didn't I tell you he was a big fellow?"

Wildberg chose this moment to take out a telegram. "By the way, I've got some bad news for you," he said to Lewis. "What with leaving at about one o'clock and getting into St. Paul about six—well read it."

The telegram from their booking agent in St. Paul informed Lewis that the press would see him soon after eight, the governor at nine, and the legislature at noon.

"I couldn't stand the gaff," I said. "I hope I never have to."

"You may."

As he sat there, trying to get grease paint off his face, it was patent that Lewis was extremely nervous. Both hands and forearms shook continuously; he had been overtaxing his strength.

Wildberg read my gaze. "He eats plenty, too," he said, "but he doesn't put on weight."

into his shirt and coat at last. He fixed me with a piercing eye and asked, "Do you drink, Augie?"

"A rare cocktail and dry white wine—that's about all."

"Well, that's not liquor. I feel a thousand times better since I went on the water-wagon—two years ago now. I certainly do. What you'll have to watch out for, Augie, is that belly of yours—good food—the Germans love it. But you've got a little French in you, too. They like their food just as much."

He had finished dressing now. He wanted me to come along, to stop somewhere for a drink or something to eat. It was plain that what he needed more than anything else was sleep, and I saw by the look in Wildberg's eyes that he hoped I wouldn't go. I said no, I must get back to Sauk City.

"They're not getting you down out there yet?" he asked, one hand on my arm; he seemed anxious.

I assured him I continued to be on a friendly basis with the flora and fauna of the region, and that none of the humans had so far breached my battlements.

We went our separate ways.

Late in 1940, on a November evening, I saw Lewis again at a small dinner party at the home of John Steuart Curry, who was then artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Lewis had



not long before come to the university to conduct a kind of class in creative writing. He was not subject to any of the usual academic strictures, and he had been at it just long enough to begin to tire, and to be the subject of constant rumors revolving about whether or not Lewis intended to write a novel about the faculty people at Wisconsin. All this was somewhat ridiculous because those people who were so concerned about this possibility were incapable of seeing themselves as Lewis might have seen them, and because Lewis had other plans. Moreover, he was soon to leave Wisconsin as impulsively as he had come.

When I reached the Curry house, Lewis had just finished looking over Curry's illustrations for Cooper's *The Prairie*, which the Limited Editions Club had published. He seemed tremendously impressed with them, and Curry in turn was pleased with Lewis's warm and generous praise. They were superb illustrations, with a remarkable feeling for drama, for character and, as always, for the prairie country.

We went in to dinner soon after. The conversation at table was inconsequential. Lewis asked how far from Sauk City La Valle was.

I told him that it was less than fifty miles.

"Oh, it must be more than that—over a hundred, surely," he replied. "My father used to practise there, just before he went up to Minnesota. I just missed being born in your county, Augie!"

I suggested he might be said to have been conceived in Sauk County, Wisconsin but born in Sauk Center, Minnesota.

"Think of the two of us coming out of Sauk County!" he exclaimed, his eyes dancing.

Lewis looked well—not so harrassed or haggard as on the night of *Angela Is Twenty-two*. His features gave the casual observer the

uncanny conviction that they were skeletal: gaunt, pockmarked, deep-eyed.

I asked him how he liked lecturing at the university.

"I enjoy it. I've got a few people who can write, I think—and then the usual women who hope for the best but who'll never write."

Curry asked Lewis whether he liked Madison.

"I like Madison, but I don't think I'm meeting the right people," answered Lewis.

This casual remark threw an immediate air of doubt over the table. I could understand that there were among those present some who might ask themselves: The right people for what? For that novel about university life? Was Lewis using his position there to inform himself? But what he meant was not that all, as Curry certainly knew, and as I did. He meant to say that he was not meeting the real people, the literary people, or the creative people he could find akin. If there had been any doubt about his meaning, his next words were explanatory. He mentioned that of those he had met, he especially liked Gunnar Johannsen, the pianist-composer.

But of the people in Madison "society" he met, he did not say much at all. This silence was more eloquent than if he had said much. Society had taken him up, but Lewis was never at home in society. Even the subject was distasteful to him, and he changed it before it had been exhausted. He spoke of a trip to Paris.

"I never had such a good time in my life—twelve days on a slow steamer. Met all kinds of interesting people. Everyone was good—except one woman who got to talking at every opportunity, all about herself, and it got so that no matter how polite we tried to be, we

just couldn't do it. Everybody had to be pleasantly soused before we could stand even a little bit of her."

He turned to me. "Ever been to Paris, Augie?"

I had not.

"Have you traveled at all?"

"I've been down in Jesse Stuart's country, in Virginia—New England—New York," I said. I mentioned a few other places.

"Well, you've been around," he conceded.

I went on to say that I disliked cities, yet New York had not seemed strange to me; I could adjust to any city, but without liking it.

He nodded approvingly. "You're living in a beautiful country here. It's like New England, except that the old things aren't here, of course. I want to come out and see you some day soon." (I found his card on my door one day not long after, when I came back from the hills.)

We left the dinner table. I began to talk with Lewis about a recent academic book which made much of the revolt from the village as the motivating factor in so many of the Midwestern writers' retreat to the cities.

Was he conscious of any such revolt? I wanted to know.

Lewis laughed. "They're always writing stuff like that. These dry-as-dust people are always probing and peering and trying to find reasons. They're never satisfied with just a good story for its sake alone—they have to dig around and trump up a whole lot of motives

and meanings the author never intended. And if the author objects, they just dismiss him and tell him he's an artist in spite of himself, and go right on their way."

I did not want to monopolize Lewis and stepped away. Immediately, since the election was only two days away, the talk turned to politics.

"How do you stand, Augie?" asked Lewis.

"I'm not a party member, but I'm for F. D. R."

"So am I," he said heartily, "and I don't care who knows it. There are some people I know around Madison who act as if I'd committed a social error when I mention Roosevelt."

A rather spirited discussion of Roosevelt and the New Deal followed, but in it Lewis took virtually no part. He had a slightly bored air, as if, having come to a decision about Roosevelt, he did not any longer wish to discuss the subject. But he was no more isolated in this aspect of the evening than in any other; he seemed like someone who did not really belong but only played a part that was expected of him. Even here, in the midst of congenial company, he was very much alone and conscious of being so. He was already chafing at the bit, already planning his sudden departure from the university.

In the conversation that followed between us he spoke of Sauk Center as "home." But it was clear that he had severed long ago whatever roots he had once had there. He had found out long ago that he could not go home again. He was now in that period when he took up his life at a new abode every little while, only to grow restless and move on once more. The East, Duluth, Italy again. These lay ahead of him. Three places of residence that were not home.

As the evening wore on, he began to look quite frequently at the time; it was obvious that he was expecting someone.

Soon his secretary came for him, and he left.

I did not see him again, though he telephoned once, four years later, from Duluth, to say that he was "doing" me in a piece for *Esquire*, despite the fact that he had not read any of my books since 1940, and my best work had been published since that year. He sounded exuberant, but it did not ring quite true.

#### Sherwood Anderson

When I met Sherwood Anderson, we had been corresponding casually for several years, primarily about the small town setting in American writing, secondarily about his work. That was in December, 1940, only a few months before his death. Long before, when I was an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin, I had spoken to him after a lecture he gave there, one among a host of anonymous students. But now each of us looked forward to our meeting.

It took place at the Hotel Royalton, in New York. Donald Wandrei, the St. Paul writer, and I had gone there at Anderson's invitation. We were somewhat late, and, since the dinner hour was approaching, I suggested that the four of us go somewhere to eat. Anderson suggested Rosoff's, just down Forty-fourth Street.

Anderson was obviously a very genuine, very gracious, gentle man, entirely unassuming and natural, which I appreciated very much, since I was fond enough of his work to be somewhat diffident. But it was not possible to be long diffident in Sherwood Anderson's company. A kind of mellow gentleness pervaded him; he invited confidences.

He was at the time on a liquid diet, having drunk some kind of fruit juice that had upset his stomach. Perhaps it was a harbinger of the mortal illness that was to follow so soon. He jested on this occasion about his having a typical "writer's stomach"; I said my own seemed to have hardened against weaknesses in the past few years. He was looking forward now to that last journey, to South America, and was being especially careful of his health; he seemed to be anticipating the journey with considerable pleasure.

Our conversation was easy and wide-ranged. We talked about politics. He and his wife, Anderson said, had worked for Roosevelt. I mentioned that Masters had declared himself for Willkie, which surprised Anderson a little. His eyes twinkled, and he smiled.

"Masters has been very cool toward me for many years, ever since an incident in Chicago," said Sherwood, his smile broadening. "We were both after the same girl, and I won out. Edgar hasn't been able to see much in me or my writings since then."

That this was true, I knew; I had heard Masters on the subject of Anderson within a day or two before this meeting. But Anderson spoke entirely without animosity or condescension, and Masters could not be said to have done likewise. Later, speaking of his own work and that of others, Anderson was honest in his appraisals, without lurid dramatization or exaggeration, and also without excessive modesty. He spoke casually of his new book, his memoirs, on which he was at work for Harcourt Brace.

At this point, thinking of Sherwood's having lived in many places and would, quite possibly, have a long story to tell, Wandrei asked, "Is it to be sectional or complete in one volume?"

Both the Andersons evidently misunderstood the question. "Oh, no, it won't be at all sexual," said Sherwood. "Unless necessary," added Mrs. Anderson.

This sensitivity doubtless derived from the early critical assault on Sherwood's work as pornographic and written by a man interested only in sex for its own sake, the ridiculous kind of fulmination that passed for criticism in the 'teens and twenties. He had actually colored a little in his denial, but our laughter soon cleared the air, and he answered Wandrei's question by saying that he contemplated only one volume of memoirs.

Then he added, "*Many Marriages* gave me an unjust reputation as a writer of sexual novels. Of course, there were the reviewers of those days. They hadn't seen much like it. It was different from all the fiction most of them had ever seen. I suppose you couldn't blame them. They, like so many people, were the product of a pretty narrow point-of-view."

He spoke of others of his books.

"I wrote *Winesburg, Ohio* not in a village, but in a city, but about a village, of course. It's a complete unit and ought always to be reprinted as such. My next book of short stories and *The Triumph of the Egg* had some of my finest tales. A selection from these and maybe *Death in the Woods* should now be made and published as a separate book."

He complained of one American publisher who had taken fifty per cent of all rights in his work. "But then," he consoled himself, "I once sold a story for \$25 and not long ago *Redbook* paid me \$750 just to reprint it."

He spoke of Dreiser, whom he considered a great novelist, but nothing of a stylist. "Dreiser presents the stuff of life as he sees it, and touches it with universality, making it the common experience of all men."

I asked him about his "revolt from the village." Like Lewis, he laughed.

"That's the kind of thing people who have never lived would say. There are all these people who are just afraid to live, and they resent anybody else living. I feel sorry for them. I pity them. There wasn't anything to this revolting. I liked Clyde. I saw it the way it was and I put it down the way it was. I didn't run away from Clyde. The time came, and I went. I suppose you could say I grew away. There's a time for one kind of life and a time for another. There's no such thing as 'revolting' or 'rebelling' or whatever they want to call it."

He spoke with unusual indignation. No doubt the kind of critical attention to which he had been subjected had hurt and bewildered him. This was a way of striking back. It was something he came to say again in letters later, something he had said before in letters. He felt strongly about it. He wanted to indict the dabblers in letters who were trying to make a case for a point-of-view or an erroneous conclusion.

Wandrei asked where his first book had been published.

"My first two books were published in England by John Lane. American publishers were afraid to tackle them. Then *Mid-American Chants* came out here, and Huebsch took me on. *Winesburg, Ohio* made me known. Then, when I was pretty much down and out, and living in New Orleans, Liveright looked me up and paid me \$200 a month for all my books."

The conversation turned toward regionalism.

Sherwood was not sure that he knew what it was, though he did not seem to think regionalism per se had any special merit. That his own work should be considered regional had never occurred to him, though he could understand that he should be looked upon as an influence upon regional writers.

But he was of a different opinion about teaching an interest in con-

temporary American literature by means of the home region. "It's of a piece with writing—teaching the reading of it," he said enthusiastically. "The writer writes about that which he knows from first-hand experience—and the reader is encouraged to read it." He agreed that this was a good, sound step in reading experience, postulating that any books recommended pass the test of universality. "God knows, too many people don't know how to read now. Maybe they never learned. Maybe they've forgotten. Or maybe they just don't teach people how to read any more."

Throughout dinner I had the feeling of great warmth toward Anderson. He was so completely natural, so unassuming, so gentle that he readily inspired such warmth. I felt that Anderson and Winesburg and Clyde were all inextricably woven together; he seemed to speak for me here in New York like the voice of the Midwest, like the voice of our native country.

Dinner was over too soon, though we had been at Rosoff's for two hours. We went back to the Royalton, but we were not together much longer, for he had some work to do, and we were to go to a cocktail party which was to prove singularly dull after this pleasant visit with the Andersons.

We planned to meet again, after Sherwood's return from South America, but this was not to be.

#### Edgar Lee Masters

It was as Anderson saw the Midwest village in *Winesburg, Ohio* and as Edgar Lee Masters saw it in *Spoon River Anthology* that I knew my own milieu of Sac Prairie, Wisconsin. I looked forward keenly to my first visit to Masters. I had gone to New York by a roundabout way early in September, 1938, stopping to see Jesse Stuart in the W-Hollow country of Kentucky. Jesse had already met Masters, and had warned me that he might seem crotchety or bitter.

Much the same thing had been said by friends among the publishers I had visited in New York before calling on Masters one Sunday afternoon, in the company of the friend who had come to New York with me.

Masters was then living in his Chelsea Hotel apartment, and my first sight of him, sitting back against the windows of his living-room, impressed me as pictures of him had always done: a professional man gone wayward into creative art. Strength and power were in his figure and in his words; he was heavy, but not fat; his eyes were challenging; his hair, somewhat long, was almost white. Our meeting had been preceded by a correspondence of some years' standing. He was genial, and did not say much; before I had opportunity to speak, he pushed forward a copy of *Wind Over Wisconsin* and asked me to sign it for his secretary. While I was doing so, he ordered some dry sherry and gave my companion a cigar. Seeing that the friend I had brought with me carried a camera, he asked him to take some pictures of the apartment, at this moment bright



Derleth with his friend, Edgar Lee Masters, at Masters' New York apartment, 1940

with sunlight shining through the branches of a tree just beyond the windows.

"I may leave this place soon," he explained. "I'd like some pictures of it."

He soon became loquacious. He was filled with questions. He had asked me by letter some time ago to send a copy of my first book of poems, *Hawk on the Wind*, to Dreiser, and now he asked whether Dreiser had written of it. I said that he had.

"Dreiser's still too neglected," Masters said then. "He comes down to New York once in a while and I see him. He can talk for hours. I think he's a greater man than, say, Maugham, who after all has done only one book that really counts. He had a hard time of it, too—fighting those damned censors and publishers."

A request to see the manuscript of my next collection of poems prompted him to tell a story I had not heard previously. On one occasion, when Masters was returning from abroad with 100,000 words of *Skeeters Kirby* in his suitcase, he lost the manuscript. All during the trip he had kept the suitcase with the precious manuscript in it within sight; it was never out of his cabin. On landing, he permitted a porter to carry the bag. The porter, preceding him, put the bag with others into a taxi. For only this little while, it was out of Masters' sight, and that was the last time he saw either the suitcase or the manuscript of *Skeeters Kirby*. He could not find the taxi, and at last he became convinced that the taxi-driver had deliberately driven off. He telephoned Bob Davis, at that time editor of *Cosmopolitan*, and asked his help in finding it. Davis enlisted the aid of the police, since he knew the chief of police well. For hours porters and taxi-drivers were grilled, but in vain. Masters finally inserted an advertisement in New York papers, promising a liberal reward and no questions asked for the return of the manuscript, but it never came back. Finally, heartsick at his loss, he retired to his farm, and there began to rewrite the book.

"But it wasn't hard at all," he finished. "It was just like putting down something I knew from memory. I had it done in no time, and I think it was better for it."

He began to talk about poetry, particularly bad poetry, and read some of it. He recited from memory some hilarious burlesques of bad poems he had done in mimicry. He went on to talk about Millay, about Frost, and presently came to my own minor verse. "You're doing the right thing—staying there in the country. I want to go back myself some day—to Illinois, or Michigan, or Wisconsin. The Midwest is the place to be, somewhere in the country, somewhere in a small town. A town like Petersburg, or your Sauk City. You've got it all in you—grass, earth, air, sun and moonlight, the birds and the clouds, and running water, brooks and rivers, hills and prairie—and it all comes out in everything you write."

From poetry he passed to criticism. "There's so much bad criticism coming out nowaday that it's discouraging to face it. These little men are all mixed up with ideologies—with abstracts; they want to criticize your work on the basis of your social consciousness. Damned nonsense! The belief that you have to write about society, its economic phases, so forth, is a wild obsession. As for -isms—I haven't any use for the lot of them, unless it's good old-fashioned Americanism." He picked up a recent critical anthology which I liked. "Seen this? It's pretty bad—no taste. A good poem's up next to a mediocre or poor poem, and there's no discrimination." He shook his head.

My companion asked him to pose a little, not too stiffly, and took several pictures of him.

After this was done, Masters began to talk mellowly about death. "I've got my father's death mask in the bedroom. Will you get it, August?"

I went in and got it. A beautiful, serene face. I said so.

"It is," he agreed. "When I saw him like that—when I realized that I'd never again see that face, it was too much for me. I arranged to

have that death mask made. His moustache was better kept than the undertaker had it, but you can see how quietly beautiful his face was."

I put it back again.

Soon after, we went upstairs to meet his secretary, Alice Davis. We spent some time in her apartment, talking chiefly about two recent novels of mine which she had read.

Time was now crowding us, however, and we could not stay longer. Masters saw us all the way to the lobby of the hotel, and stood there for a while urging us to call again. I had the impression, renewed each time I saw him, that he was lonely, especially for someone from the Midwest.

I saw him again in December, 1939.

At that time, he seemed a little depressed. "This is the eighth anniversary of Lindsay's suicide," he said, shaking his head mournfully, as if still stunned by that event. "They wouldn't see what he was trying to do until he was dead, and even then they took advantage of his widow. I begged her not to sell anything of Vachel's until I got a chance to look over the contract, but she went ahead and did it anyway. I told the publisher what I thought of his terms. He said it was all 'business.' God damn such business! I tell you, August, all these publishers are just as black as they're painted!" He paced up and down the room in his agitation. "Lindsay had some feeling for America, and I'd sooner have one Lindsay than a half-dozen Eliots with their false-front houses."

Since our invitation this time had been to dinner at the Algonquin, we were soon on the way there. We went on the subway. I told Masters I had been to see Charles Hanson Towne, in connection with my biography of Zona Gale.

He immediately quoted a line from a poem by Towne. " 'I go blundering back to God.'—Blundering!" he exclaimed. " 'I go blundering back to God!' Why not walk right in and say: Here I am? I don't know what Charley's doing when he writes that stuff, honest to God I don't."

At the Algonquin we were halted briefly by Jack Wildberg and Ursula Parrott, and while we were talking with them, Alice Davis joined us. We went on to dinner. Masters resumed his talk about poetry.

"Poetry's the Wasserman test of intelligence," he said. "You can tell about a man by the way he reacts to poetry. Try it and see."

His secretary had a pet word for Masters. She called him "Buster." "Now Buster," she said, "tell them about that young woman whose feelings you hurt."

"I, hurt her feelings?" he demanded. He turned to us. "It was one of these damned poetasters' meetings, and I don't know how they came to get me there unless Alice had a hand in it."

Apparently she had, but she was saying nothing but, "You needn't have been so gruff and rough."

"I went into that group and sat down and a young woman came over to me. 'Do you like poetry?' she asked. I told her I did, and then she fired a lot of questions at me."

"And Buster getting madder all the time," put in Alice.

"After a little she went off, and then she found out who I was. She came back, and said she was insulted. Then I guess I flew off the handle myself."

He grinned now, with self-satisfaction, at the memory.

During that dinner—and later, in our room at the Algonquin—the talk took a turn to which I was becoming accustomed. Masters retreated into nostalgia. He spoke of the Midwest with longing. He spoke of going back there.

"You know, Emerson at one time went through Wisconsin by sleigh, on a lecture tour. Even Thoreau got as far west as Minnesota," he said. He contemplated the thought of Emerson's sleighing through Wisconsin, and thought it good. Perhaps he could do the same in Illinois. He would go back through the Sangamon country. He talked fondly of Petersburg, of Spoon River, of the Sangamon, of an aging uncle who still lived in that country. He spoke with such affection of that Illinois country that it was clear his heart lay there. Perhaps—and I thought it most likely—he enjoyed talking to me because I came from the Midwest to which he now looked back as into time he could not again recapture, and knew he could not, for all that he dreamed of doing so.

A few afternoons later, at a little gathering at Alice Davis's apartment in the Chelsea, Masters was in quite another mood. He was encouraged in it by the sycophantic attention of a duo of women who were there, though he seemed rather more irritated than flattered by the attitude of being looked upon as "the great man." This afternoon, however, he was waggish. He confided that he had for some time amused himself by writing light and somewhat off-color verses.

"I call it my obscenia," he said. "I write them under the name of Lute Puckett."

Indeed, he had quite a sheaf of them to show, collected under the title: *Pieces by Puckett*, consisting of verses sung to his "hen" by the poet. Masters said that he had written them to amuse himself or to relieve tension, and confessed that he was not above inflicting

them upon the most conservative of his friends at moments which could prove highly embarrassing to them. Oliver Herford was particularly a favorite victim, though an old friend who had illustrated *Spoon River Anthology*. Herford was straightlaced to the point of prudery, and Masters delighted in sending him notes enclosing Puckett verses when he knew Herford would be at some public place, and Herford would go to extreme lengths to destroy the verses at once lest something happen to him and material which he considered off-color be found on his person.

On this occasion Masters read some of the Puckett verses in a slow drawl, which suited them exactly and made them seem far more humorous than they were. One, entitled simply *Hen*, was a parody of *Trees*. He read perhaps a dozen in all before he stopped. He could not then be prevailed upon to read more, probably because he understood that they became increasingly less comic as he went along. Soon after, the gathering broke up.

A year later, I saw him again. He was still in the Chelsea apartment.

On this visit, he seemed for the first hour uncommonly at odds with the world. He attacked James Gray's *The Illinois* savagely—"Why, he drags in Grant, and Springfield, and so on—they don't belong on the Illinois River at all!"; he spoke again of Vachel Lindsay—"Why, there's a complete manuscript of his poems—and they don't publish it. His wife's too busy making ends meet to push its publication," and, at my urging Masters to publish another volume of his own poems, he said he did not want to go to his previous publishers with it, saying, "I've had enough of them!"—but it was so of most publishers, to hear him.

Then he got up and beckoned me into his bedroom. There he bent to a bureau not far from his bed. He opened one drawer after another. Each was filled with the manuscripts of unpublished poems. I looked at them in amazement. There must have been upwards of a thousand unpublished poems by Masters in that bureau. I immediately pointed out that this was hardly an adequate repository for the manuscripts.

"Copies are in the Library of Congress," he assured me. "So they won't be lost if something happens to me."

There were other copies of some of them extant. He had sent some to me in correspondence; doubtless other correspondents had had copies of those he thought good enough to circulate. But he had no immediate plans for another collection; he did not want to talk about publishers and publishing, for publishers were all knaves.

"And authors mostly fools?" I asked.

His scowl broke and he said, "Maybe a poet shouldn't be a lawyer."

We returned to the sitting-room and Masters took his favorite chair, back to the windows. He said he had recently taken a trip back to Petersburg and Springfield, Illinois. He had chanced upon John Clary, a descendant of the Clary boys Lincoln had known. Clary had recognized him as Squire Masters' kin, and had taken him out to the cemetery to show him the graves of Clarys for three or four generations. From Petersburg, Masters had written to H. L. Mencken to suggest that there was still room in the Masters' burial plot for Mencken, as well as Masters, to which Mencken had characteristically replied, declining with thanks, writing that he had already made arrangements with the Museum of Natural History to have his body stuffed.

When he spoke of the Illinois country of his youth, his voice mellowed and his eyes glowed. He talked with zest, reciting intimate details of his visit. He made Petersburg come to such life that I was moved after his death to go there, to visit his grave, to walk about the village.

"Why don't you go back and stay there?" I asked.

"I couldn't do it."

This going back in memory to his childhood and youth, together with an occasional visit to the country, were the utmost he could venture. He needed the stimulation of the city, the people who could talk his language; he could not go back and pick up where he had left off decades before. For Chicago, curiously, he had no longing whatsoever. He spoke of that city casually, as of some place where he had lived, with neither like nor dislike.

The moment seemed to me a good one to touch upon the academic study I had been reading, the author of which had made so much of the "revolt from the village" in connection with the work of Masters, as well as of others. How did he feel? Had he been in revolt? Had he felt disillusioned and pessimistic when he wrote *Spoon River Anthology*?

"I'll bet anything it was a teacher who wrote that book. And a woman teacher, at that."

I admitted that he was right on both counts.

"It wouldn't make any difference to those who say I felt disillusioned to say that I didn't; they wouldn't believe it, any way. I felt very joyous and very hopeful. That was in the days before the World War knocked all our blocks over and ruined our castles in the air. It wouldn't make any difference to them if I said I was concerned solely with telling the truth, with making a record of what I had seen and learned. If they can't see that many poems in the *Spoon River* books celebrate faithful and believing hearts, I couldn't point that out to them. Let them go their way into error and absurdity if they want to.

"I remember when I was in high school, I heard Poe and Whitman degraded and cried down, and it was by the teachers and the textbooks. They are still at it, and it's hardly likely that the woman who wrote that book has any nerve or any mind or any judgment or any reasoning power, or any comprehension of life and literature."

His vehemence left me with little to say.

"I know they say I'm cranky and hard to get along with," he went on, "but it's a fact that everybody who does something has to contend with these—these lice, who pretend they know how he did it and why he did it, and all about him. I've known a lot of these textbook people. They have degrees, they have professorships, but I never knew very many of them who had any mind."

I took issue with him at this point. But he would have none of it. He shook his head and his eyes glinted angrily.

"Wait until you're old enough to see for yourself. They all apply moralities to literature. I'd as soon apply moralities to chemistry, to mathematics, as to poetry. Those fellows will stand for writers of the past who were free with their words. But with writers of the day, morals are the measuring sticks; and all the while their moral tests are small." He made a movement of rejection with one hand. "But this subject has been debated a hundred, a thousand times, and it never gets anywhere. I didn't revolt against any village. The best years of my life were spent back there in Illinois. I had to get out to make a living and I did it. To say that I was in revolt against village life when I was just seeing it truthfully is being just about as silly as you can get."

He turned to the subject of my own work. Appleton-Century had just published *Still Small Voice*, my biography of Zona Gale. He had read it.

"You've done a very good job," he said. "Exceptionally so for a first biography. I'd have called the book *Windflower* myself. Zona always made me think of a windflower—one of those early pasqueflowers bent and torn by the wind."

Since this book was over and done with, I did not want to talk about it. I ventured upon the subject of regionalism. He took it up with enthusiasm, wanting to know all the circumstances of my lecturing the course at Wisconsin. I explained the University of Wisconsin's

widely known Short Course for students in the College of Agriculture, and reminded him that John Steuart Curry was also affiliated with that college.

Who, then, were regionalists? he wanted to know.

I began to mention names, but as fast as I spoke a name, Masters ticked it off. I was surprised that he seemed to reserve some special venom for Sherwood Anderson. "Anderson can't write, never could," he said flatly.

I disagreed stoutly, saying that *Winesburg, Ohio* was as much a literary landmark as *Spoon River Anthology*.

"He's all mixed up. He's always groping for what he wants to say. He just can't seem to get it down," he went on.

It was plain to me soon, even if Anderson himself had not explained it a few days later, that the basis for Masters' disparagement of Anderson lay in something personal, rather than in his literary judgment.

I took up some of Masters' new poems in manuscript and read them. Once again I urged the assembling of a new collection.

He shook his head. "A publisher is to an author like a manager to a fighter—he can throw the fight. I can't say my relations with publishers have been very good. I know they think I'm a sour old man and a tartar—but I know what rights I'm entitled to have and I stand up for them."

He was soon at his most vitriolic in his condemnation of publishers. Once in this mood, he was difficult to divert into other channels. Moreover, the hour was now getting late, and I had a dinner engagement. So I bade him farewell, promising to send him the manuscript

of a selection of my poems, for which he wanted to write a brief introduction.

It was seven years before I saw him again.

World War II had intervened. Masters was then no longer in his Chelsea apartment. He had been found ill there, and had been cared for by his second wife, Ellen Masters, with whom he was now living in Abington, Pennsylvania, where Mrs. Masters taught at Ogontz College. There they lived in a rambling, English-type house. My two companions and I came in by car from Gettysburg at six. We were to spend the night with the Masters before going on to New York.

Masters was looking quite well, though it was evident that his legs were no longer as strong as they had been. He sat in a kind of patio-porch off at one side of the house, next to a table littered with all kinds of letters, books, and papers. He had his hat on, and he kept it on, even subsequently at dinner, which was all but waiting on our arrival. I gave him my arm to table, and was upset to find that it took fifteen minutes for him to shuffle along across the room to the table.

Once at table, which was shared by his mother-in-law as well as his wife, he spoke of various people with something of the old mellow ness.

Of his attractive daughter, Marcia, who was also a poet, he said: "I don't understand her. She's a strange girl, a strange girl."

Of Witter Bynner's new book of poems: "Bynner's a fine fellow, but his poetry's thin. He used to contribute to *Reedy's Mirror*, and that set the bond between us." He went on to talk of modern poetry. "But I can't read most of the poetry being written today; I just can't read it. Those fellows have nothing to say, and they say nothing as obscurely as possible."

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He confessed that he had assembled a new book of poems. "You and others have got me to do it. I'm calling it *Far Horizons*. All the poems were written ten years ago or more."

Had he sent it out?

"No. I don't know about letting anyone publish it. Perhaps Macmillan will do it. But the trouble with most of the publishers is, they're venal, and some of them are downright crooked."

I said I hoped the manuscript would see print.

"Oh, it won't be lost," he assured me.

He asked about our journey, about the Civil War novel I expected to write as part of the *Sac Prairie Saga*. We talked for some time about such recent books of mine as he had read. He seemed especially pleased with published portions of my village journal—*Village Year* and *Village Daybook*.

"That's the real Middlewest, August," he said. "You've got it all there in those books—the flavor and the meaning of life in our villages."

After dinner I took him back to his wide-armed chair on the porch, and there spent a wonderfully mellow evening with him. It was one again, of reminiscence. The crickets and katydids which stridulated outside sent his mind back to the country of his early years.

"Oh, I like to hear those crickets," he said pensively. "They remind me of the Sangamon country—of Petersburg and Havana, yes, and even of our old home in Lewiston. I had a letter the other day from my old Uncle Will Masters. He's 89 now. Will always calls me 'Gig.' He used to call me 'Little Snot-nosed Gig.' We used to catch sunfish and crappies and catfish in the Sangamon. Uncle Will used to take

me along with him. One night, I recall, we got caught in quite a storm there on the river."

The September dusk moved in.

Masters sat in the growing darkness of the porch, talking, once again bringing to life the Petersburg and Lewiston of his young years, bringing back the past which was, now that his mortality had been brought so sharply home to him, so much closer than it ever is in man's prime. It was an unforgettable evening—two hours with him and the most pleasant of his memories—of Uncle Will, of his father and mother, of the beauty of the Sangamon, which he had told so well in his book on that river, of bull-heads and sunfish, of catfishing by night, of bonfires on the river's shore, of the little lives, the joys and sorrows of country living—everything which had gone to make the *Spoon River* books. He called it all back, revitalized it, made it newly meaningful.

But at ten-thirty he tired and chose to go to bed.

We had breakfast in the morning before we set out for New York. He was somewhat easier on his feet in the morning than he had been the previous evening. Ellen Masters said it was always so after a period of rest. That morning it was she who helped him to the table.

"Oh, she's a grand woman," said Masters of her. "I don't know how I'd get along without her, I don't, for a fact!"

Ellen smiled. "He demands babying and all the attention in the world."

I said something about how happy I was to see him looking better. I had been somewhat concerned by his silence in response to recent letters—all save that one of invitation to spend some time with him and Ellen here.

"Oh, he expects people to write to him even when he doesn't write to them," said Ellen Masters.

We spoke of his youngest son, Hilary, their only child. He had just gone into the air service. But Masters seemed a little distant from him; however affectionately he spoke of him, there was a patent cleavage of time between them, between the boy and his father, separated by almost sixty years.

After breakfast, we went one last time to the porch. I was ready to go on, but one of my companions wanted to take some photographs, despite the dark, murky weather. Masters took a kind of grim pose as soon as the camera was turned in his direction. It was not that he was unwilling that photographs should be taken, but simply that he hoped to look his best for them. He gave the photographer directions from time to time, but nothing could be done to overcome the greyness of the morning. It had rained in the night and the freshness of wet grass and wet leaves was everywhere.

At last the photographs were taken. It was time to part.

"Smell that grass!" said Masters. "Doesn't that remind you of the country out your way?" Then he smiled a little, and his eyes looked past us all. "You know, when I went out fishing with Uncle Will, I always preferred to catch fish on a corked line. There was something about that cork bobbing up and down . . ."

I did not see him again.

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I remember these three men now from these meetings as they were in reality, even though no individual meeting—save that with Anderson—quite added up to that reality. Lewis was a lonely man, keenly conscious of his rootlessness, trying in vain to put down roots every-

where. Masters was dissatisfied and tired; he wanted to go back to the halcyon days of his youth and to the scenes of those days, but he could not because he knew that the past cannot be recaptured. Only Sherwood Anderson, rooted in Marion, Virginia, seemed happy and at ease with life. There he was still groping, still asking questions of life, knowing that life offered no infallible answers.

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## Weller Embler

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### a comment on the romantic sensibility

The romantic imagination, distinguished by its creative intensity, transmutes gross matter into attractive shapes and forms, and makes, in its way, the world liveable. For example, if, as we say, matter is electrical phenomena in constant motion, then is it not appropriate to say also it is the creative personality that gives body and spirit to the concourse of particles? If it is not the human imagination, then what makes a thing what we perceive it to be? Except to the physicist as physicist, natural happenings are uninteresting until the romantic (or some other) flame dazzles them into life.

Nature imitates art, said Oscar Wilde, and his observation was something more than clever paradox. That we see what we have been trained to see by imaginative and original minds is easily verified in daily experience. For Robert Louis Stevenson certain old houses demanded to be haunted; certain coasts were set apart for shipwreck; certain dank gardens cried aloud for murder. Stevenson's places were fashioned after nineteenth-century romantic specifications. Ours are designed after twentieth-century psychological imperatives, romantic or other. "Where (Nature) used to be give us Corots and Daubignys," said Wilde, "She gives us now (in 1890) exquisite Monets and entrancing Pissarros." One might bring the thought up to date by adding that where nature used to give us Monets and Pissarros, she gives us now Matisses and Picassos and Dubuffets, exquisite or entrancing as you will, but new and original ways, nevertheless, of seeing the world around us. And what, if

further example of this point be necessary, shall we say of the ways the motion pictures and television have taught us to evaluate and shape the world around us?

The romantic view of life is soon popularized in any age. There is something in the romantic philosophy that lends itself to ready corruption. The fresh appearance with which romanticism brightens the world is easily soiled by the avidity of the unimaginative millions (and this is not by any means intended as a reference to "poor" or "uneducated" people, who are sometimes the last refuge of authentic romance), those multitudes who are sick to see the world as something brighter than their purgatorial vision makes it out to be. Naïve delight in sunshine and rain, in the countryside, in daydreaming, in children, in the night, the mysterious, in lovemaking, quickly becomes a fashionable or faddish attitude toward sun and rain and children and love and the countryside. The romantic view of any age becomes the sentimental view of the succeeding age. Society tends to take away the beautiful and to leave only the pretty, it exchanges courage for irascibility, it robs itself of tenderness and comes home to sticky sentiment. Society is always nibbling away at the great emotions, exploiting them to venal ends. To be distracted is the sole aim of the multitudes, and a corrupt romanticism always obliges.

Just as the mind of man can be creative and original—can be, as it were, in league with deity—so it can be imitative and categorical. Just as the mind creates, so it destroys; and in the realm of ideas and emotions, its weapon of destruction is the category. Once we put the startled deer, the circus clown, the dream of love, or buccaneers, ocean moonlight, solitary shepherds, odalisques, or plumage of jungle birds into the category labeled "romantic," just so have we doomed these imaginative materials to strike poses in a gallery of waxworks.

And so we are disillusioned. The diversion does not last. The distractions, true to their nature, are fleeting. The category gives way painfully to the reality—the reality of nothingness, of colorless,

shapeless matter, a flux of electrons, as aimless as smoke or the random thoughts that come and go in a sleepless night.

The romantic imagination puts spirit—its spirit—into nature. There is an interplay between what is outside and what is inside, a kind of mutual agreement to make or create something beautiful. The romantic personality finds little and makes much—informs the world with its own extravagance of spirit. Romanticism ever refreshes itself, returns ever to its source, the creative imagination, for the formula that alters nothingness into being. Among the modern romantic poets in English literature, Dylan Thomas is a good example of our thesis. "Fern Hill" is nature's latest fancy, and on the whole, to emend Oscar Wilde, she reproduces it quite admirably.



Mr. Yates is editorial associate and music critic of *Arts and Architecture*. Imbedded in artistic controversy, he contributed an article, "Who Are the American Intellectuals?", to the first issue of *Arts in Society*. He challenges here some of the remarks by Prof. R. W. Stallman, whose article, "The Position of Poetry Today," also appeared in the first issue.

## Peter Yates

### the position of poetry today: another look

Poetry, hell! like a disease  
this making poems for no one to want,  
perverted prayer, prophecy, ethic of invective —  
like a disease. It's hell.

If the word won't live, no one can make it,  
you—nor you! Must shape through its shafts  
the uncommon common. Everything anybody can do,  
that's nothing anybody needs or needs to do.

Frost on the rime. Poetry! A disease  
you learn: cant if it isn't.  
Poetry! any learned critic  
can pluck an edged quill from a tale of Merlin,  
with cat's-cradle, doves' feet thudding on the roof.

Yet one incanted virgin pinned to Amherst  
upon a cloud of unknowing heard the ghosts  
of sermons singing hymns, and the iambic  
gave gold. She will not be analyzed.

Professors are wise men, amply happy in their friends, can tell them what's good and what isn't, summon up a prevailing quotation and locate myth in the reference books. Presently professors conservatively admire quatrains: "as for the poetry or mere subject matter,

it extends from William Carlos Williams back to Whitman." Thus Professor Stallman recently from this pulpit. "Rather than divide poets into two camps, the critic should divide the good ones from the poor ones, as every poet has some of each. The best poems transcend their subject matter, both subject and style being exploited to shape a formed meaning with beginning and end." A rather excessive compliment to pay *The Divine Comedy* or *Paradise Lost*.

The professor-critic, riding on the foam of his opinions, presumes superhuman status. Poetry is not for him to learn from; he is the man who can pick winners from losers, and he doesn't have to bet on it; one who, like Yvor Winters, can prescribe for posterity. Whatever is very good he can also explain. Elsewhere he tells us: "A poem must provide its own clues, patterning its intention so that no reading other than the intended one is possible. The best artist is the one who constructs his poem in such a way as to admit of no interpretation but the one intended, the intended meaning being determined within the framework of the work itself." Then he praises *Arachne* by Empson, the Master of the Seven Ambiguities. He quotes Frost: "A writer is entitled to anything the reader can find in him." So he parodies one of Frost's more lucid lyrical meditations by a dead-serious prose exegesis. "In criticism," he gives it as his opinion, "wit is usually misplaced." He had better keep away from that devil of critical wit, Hugh Kenner.

Art has this in common with chess and some other lifetime games—a champion eventually gets to the top and stays there. Of course the time lag may be longer than *his* lifetime. Another may be a poet by destiny from boyhood. In chess, at the top, Champion Botvinnik is a hard man to beat. But a twelve-year-old boy, not exceptionally bright by school rating, with nothing in his head but chess, has become chess champion of the United States.

By current theory, to be a good poet you learn the skill of making acceptable poems, submit yourself to the ritual and your poems to other men's editorial opinions and are published. Along the route, fellowships, grants, praise, prizes, recognition may fall on you, like

bays from a crowd encouraging a marathon; the lean fellows strain to get ahead. Nobody is very sure what this leisureless competition has to do with poetry; poet or not, if you aren't published, you are one with the scribbling millions. Everybody in this democratic nation wishes to be somebody, so the poem is made for the ritual, to be acceptably printed, and the art goes waste.

Critics who like to follow this sport without playing it should accept the character of sports columnists or touts. When the champion does appear, anyone can distinguish him, though few know how to praise him. Can tell what's wrong with him or analyze his character or "form" but not what goes on inside to make him champion. Most of the brilliant prospects the scouts bargain for end up in the minors. It's a good man knows how to see a champion, to recognize him first and then perceive him as he is. I read Hugh Kenner for that reason (see his *Gnomon*). He goes deeper than Blackmur; either provokes me to an argument.

Professor Stallman swats us twice with Henry James (who has lately been replacing T. S. Eliot as the solid critic's *vade mecum*): "Art should be as hard as nails. . . stonyhearted triumphs of objective form"; and "But I have the imagination of disaster, and see life, indeed, as ferocious and sinister." If this is so, then most of the polite poets Professor Stallman selects are as mutton in the meatshop, to be fed on and discarded by the poet who asserts this tough criterion. Poets imitate and poets steal; the true poet has entered so far into the art of stealing he will seldom be caught. He does not reflect style, he remakes it. In this altered habit he may go for some period unrecognized. What he steals he makes his own, the rest is excrement. Success may attend the true poet; he seldom attends it.

I can't understand why any critic who offers these two quotations of Henry James should waste time scolding Peter Viereck, a verse journalist. In writing about poetry one should discuss poets. (The proper critic nowadays has it, one should discuss poems. Having rid ourselves of the personality of Homer, we can, as Yvor Winters threatens to do, get rid of Dante. Stravinsky dislikes the word

"genius": applied to himself it is as comely as he wears it.) Other types of poetry can be fun, sport, topical commentary, finger exercise. Some very great music began with the intention to compose exercises. A poet who has not mastered iamb-trochee, quatrain, and sonnet, will all his life be struggling with the medium, like a cow in quicksand or like Whitman; if he is at his ease in the medium, he will constantly be having to kick his ease out of it. He rejects from his own work just those lines of habit which competitors of lesser status infallibly recognize to praise. Like Whitman he prefers his own habit, however muddy. But he is seldom content with it, any more than Schoenberg, Schubert, or Beethoven, each of whom wished he might have had formal training. When a dead poet has been ranked and can produce no more fifth aces, the critic can stack his deck with a firm hand.

"I think it is John Crowe Ransom's poetry that has set the standard for the younger poets," Professor Stallman rambles, "—style rather than subject matter." If you have nothing to write about, you can put it in verse. And elsewhere: "When is a poem a poem? The example is Ransom or Frost at his best (not the Other Frost)." In spite of such caution, the urge to attempt a commitment will expose itself. "His (Frost's) poems evince a predilection for a condition of contrast of opposites and for arriving in their thought process at a condition of choice, a choice which in some poems is resolved."

Professor Stallman plainly does not know his own mind. ". . . Robert Lowell, it is generally conceded, is the best poet of his generation." ". . . (An exception is Whittemore, the most original voice of them all)." He is attempting a differentiation between young poets and younger poets, a habit of mind common and useful in kids' games. The twelve-year-old new American chess champion may be ranked incidentally the best of the younger chess players.

Where, in reading through Robert Lowell's oceanic fantasies, will you find the smack of living, according to the previously quoted standard, pertinent as this by Thomas McGrath:

... drowned men  
Beached on the bar-stools of a savage shore.  
Blood has frozen in the veins of neon...

(*Figures From a Double World*, published by  
Alan Swallow)

When we find the touchstone outsize to its poem, should we rate the poet less? He, rather than the stanza-weaver, is the man to wait on.

Let us leave Professor Stallman bemused among his polite poets and examine the other half; less well known than the polite poets, they have as much to do with "the position of poetry today." Jonathan Williams has sent me a clutch of poetry books he has printed for their authors on several presses and, by appealing to persons with money and some literary conscience, contrived to pay for printing. Brother Jonathan, I call him, for he is a man after my own heart. A GI in Germany, he discovered that German printers would do good work for less money than at home. Not wasting a minute he wrote some poets of his acquaintance asking them for manuscripts, got these printed, paid for and distributed. Since coming home he has stayed with the good work. Through him and such others as Alan Swallow of Denver, the submerged half of American poetry, the more explosive half, is coming to the surface. Jonathan and I disagree about many things, including diction. He helps edit, for example, *The Black Mountain Review*, a manual of *precieuse* expectoration.

what i worry about is you and what  
you worry about is him and what he  
Worries about is a bottle of beer  
which worries about me because i'm

how's that for a quatrain huh bayby  
how's that for a quatrain

(*Joel Oppenheimer*)

The *Review* originated in the workings of Black Mountain College, a now defunct institution, where artists tried to create the spiritual

paroxysm so many among us believe to be art at the tooth root. The belief is that to have art you have to go where art is and there in the peculiar fashion peculiarly do it. For some artists being an artist runs away with them. St. Teresa declared that it is more dangerous for one who has no vocation to become a nun than to marry. An artist without a vocation must invent one and be an occasion of harm to many. But that's as true of our polite poets.

We are discussing here a disease of the American literary mind with which Ransom, Blackmur, and the writers of corrective literary essays don't know how to deal. Blackmur as a young man tried to break it to his rule of words in an article about e e cummings. Praise the product and the praise seems nonsense; toss it in the wastebasket and it bounces back. Hugh Kenner on Dr. Williams or Pound may seem to have cleared up the whole subject and has indeed taken it some distance. But he tosses out Whitman with the Whitman-praisers. He seems not to realize that if you run down Whitman you must run down Williams and Pound. The same sentimental vulgar yearnings that go wrong with Whitman go wrong, too, with Dr. Williams, bind Pound, the classic of exemplars, to an indecently undisciplined American agrarian with the scholarship and principles of Tom Watson, keep Eliot trying to lift his soul above literature—and only Gertrude Stein saw through most of them. She knew her Americans.

Now try *The Whip* by Robert Creely, *Migrant Books* (another job by Jonathan Williams, printed in Mallorca, issued here, in Canada and Great Britain). Such poetry, though generally excluded from polite discussion, has its own underground. Mr. Creely reacts not to the pattern in the carpet but to the stain in the pattern. By which he can reach like a match flash an instantaneous contemporaneity.

As I sd to my  
friend, because I am  
always talking.—John, I

sd, which was not his  
name, the darkness sur-  
rounds us, what

can we do against  
it, or else, shall we &  
why not, buy a goddamn big car.

drive, he sd, for  
christ's sake, look  
out where yr going.

Is there any real difference, canceling oddity against elegance, between this and St.-John Perse's "irritable mainsail, the colour of brains"? (*Elegies*, translated by Louise Varese.) Each poem deals imaginatively with that with which it purports to deal. Each poet writes as though translating from a remote, authentic original. When you go back looking for the translation, you find the original. It's still a dead language. As is, for all its anthological virtuosity, Pound's translation of the Chinese Classic Anthology.

Until you pick up Robert Penn Warren's *Poems 1954-56* (Random House). Set this beside your Macaulay or the weekly stint of *Sagittarius*:

He puzzled how virtue finds perch past confusion and wrath;  
How even Praetorian brutes, blank of love, as of hate,  
Proud in their craftsman's pride only, held a last gate,  
And died, and each back unmarred as though at the barracks bath.

Is it by traits of personality that this author holds the esteem of colleagues surely not less perceptive than I am?

So match the pride of Warren's "craftsman" with this by Louis Zukofsky (*Some Time*, published by Jonathan Williams):

Ah, my craft, it is as Homer says:  
'A soothsayer, a doctor, a singer  
and a craftsman is sure of welcome  
where he goes. . .'

Zukofsky is that craftsman. It is enough for this minute. He is also what else he mentions, as a poet should be. A poem should be much

more than evidence for the making of poems. The mud in Whitman is very native mud. Excuse me for barking up so many trees; it keeps your mind off what else I do to them which is only of interest to dogs. In dealing with poetry you are dealing with what is not only of interest to critics. American poetry is also today, as it always has been, a search for subject matter to put aside critics. We are too conscious of our literary imperfections. A part of the submerged poet's subject matter is to flaunt them. Reed Whittemore, whom Professor Stallman praises, writes:

Doodle is waiting raised to a fine art,  
Waiting in phone booths for answers, in classrooms for tests.  
It is done with but part of the mind, but a pleasant part.  
It brightens deserts of notebooks, scratch pads and desks.

It does, in my case, for my work, what others expect  
Of courses in writing. . . . *(A Week of Doodle)*

Kenneth Rexroth, a poet of nature and spirit, has become by indisposition with the times a polemicist for the submerged half of American letters. He enjoys, like any spleenetic who inveighs against sin, a large transient audience. He is better read as a poet. His translations from the Chinese and Japanese, besides being models of translation, offer a lesson in the deliberate control of our own speech. The polite poets would do well to put aside their postgraduate metrics and learn from him, for he is a real poet. He has brought into his own better verses the Chinese poetic vision, the Japanese precision:

The salmon as it plunges  
Upward in the waterfall  
Cannot see or touch itself,  
And so it can never know  
What sort of creature it is.

To get at the spirit of the poets who speak for the submerged half, without wishing to howl for them, one might borrow this epigraph from *Overland To The Islands* by Denise Levertov (another Williams book):

Let's go—much as that dog goes,  
intently haphazard.

... Under his feet  
rocks and mud, his imagination, sniffing,  
engaged in its perceptions—dancing  
edgeways, there's nothing  
the dog despairs on his way,  
nevertheless he  
keeps moving, changing  
pace and approach but  
not direction—"every step an arrival."

This is not so far from the average of Robert Frost, the easy amble; it is a long way from the Frost of his professional admirers. Reading about among the immense numbers of the submerged poets one has at first much difficulty to distinguish between those few who do what they wish and are capable of it and the very many who are incurably discouraged, lazy, or incapable. These last may throw up fountains of steam as steadily as Old Faithful; they are no nearer a poetic purpose. Yet they are essentially no worse, if less technically able, than the fabricators of metric slip-covers. I must admit that I cannot distinguish the slip-cover which conceals common furniture from the slip-cover which, having no subject matter, stands up by itself. Or the slip-cover, which, having too many pretensions to classic ornament, stands up by its gilt.

One can go on at some length setting apart true poets from lazy, reprehensible, or merely conscientious writers and greeting each true poet by a fragment that is the recognition of his style. Provided, however, one admits the likelihood of being often deaf or clumsily, uncritically wrong. I shall offer only two more, one extensively published yet seldom mentioned by the critical essayists, the other almost unpublished.

If I were to select one poet, not yet an old master, who stands for and expresses what is genuinely happening in the ferment of American poetry, one in the line of Emerson, Emily Dickinson, and Melville, having occasionally the muddy "(and/or)"\* bardic gift without the beard of Whitman, I would choose Kenneth Patchen. He is a hard man to criticize; to criticize him one has to learn from him, which our professional critics prefer not to do, while at the same

\* I borrow the muddy conjunction from Pound's *Guide to Kulchur*.

time one must not give in to him because he is too likely on many occasions to substitute invective for exactness, to let prejudice do the work of thought, to sentimentalize imprecision. He can prophesy effectively, as Rexroth usually cannot; he has the lyrical touch with a transforming power; he knows the idiom of the underground; he is a master of the rare art of nonsense poetry (I do not mean comic or light verse, a technical exercise not to be despised nor to be compared with the art of nonsense); he is unafraid of mud (sung or slung), and he is indebted to no European ancestor or tradition. He can sing hymns or get ahead with a plain subject like Emily Dickinson. While others have been plunging into Poetry and Jazz with careless abandon, he has carried into it the detachment that is the magic circle of the true poet and produced, to music composed by Allyn Ferguson, a record I cannot recommend too highly (*Kenneth Patchen Reading with the Chamber Jazz Sextet: Cadence Records*). The hep boys do not like it; it eschews the callow Muzak of the hep. The best from his many books can be found in his *Selected Poems*, enlarged and reissued in 1957 by *New Directions*. His use of words can be transforming; he prefers words to metaphors. He dodges the technical with dodges as delightful as infuriating:

(O little duck, why d'you keep edging up to that damn telephone?  
It's disconnected.) (*Poemscapes*, published by Jonathan Williams)

And I shall not quote from him any more, because the only thing to do, for anyone properly interested in American poetry, or poetry whether or not American, is go and read him. At the start he may be disconcerting. If you cannot revise your notions to meet him at least halfway, you had better revise your notions.

The other poet is Peyton Houston. He has gone after and torn apart the sonnet, as a dog rips a cushion. Often the repression of his gift betrays him to an excess, mires him in false statement. Poetry allows him no escape; it is the necessity of his spirit to create, to order of its confused undertakings a microcosmos. Such natural force may not run in polite channels: thus Professor Stallman is offended. The

excess has a tendency to flood, therefore Hugh Kenner, knowing the levees may not hold, must bag them up with proofs of rationalization, sarcasm, irony. For, however the man of the library may object, the power of the human spirit to violate common and proper rules of order, whether or not to its own or anyone's advantage, or for gain, goes beyond the power of any process to contain it, in art as in conquest. That is what the submerged part, the underground of American poetry is continuously asserting. From that underground has emerged, after and in spite of enormous losses, the central tradition of the American poets. There has never been a tradition of American formal poetry, or a formal tradition of any sort in American poetry, though thousands of polite, formal, and forgotten poets.

When Peyton Houston is at his full, the light whitens around the black assertions of his landscape. His celebration of subject matter is as self-concentrated as a Gesualdo madrigal.

The idea

like thick glass, cubed, crystal, like sea  
water slightly green, stands object  
in the illumination of the mind: to be inspect-  
ed gradually, come upon circumspectly  
and casually from any and all directions: from the  
back one notes that it is not in itself complete, requires opposites,

Nor is it in itself finally definite  
thereby entailing infinities of continuum: from top  
it appears a bird, from front a tiger, from underneath it is a rope  
thrown to a drowning man. Sometimes it seems a burning glass  
to kindle a world afire, sometimes through it you can see figures huge as  
mountains  
which are the enlarged anatomies of fleas,

sometimes intense  
small figures squirm; those are suns.

Now the important thing about such a poem is not whether you understand it, or whether you agree with it, or whether it inspires you to heroic or exquisite imaginings, or whether you like it (that least of all), or whether it in any way meets your smarkest to detect

the malignancy of a true poem, or whether you are acquainted with the poet, know his books, where he teaches, or accept his credentials: it has become what it is, is such a burled concentrate as a sequoia produces. Keep it in a dish in water and it will bring forth decorative green sprouts; it is a tree in flaw.

Mr. McCanse is an associate professor of English, University Extension Division, the University of Wisconsin and author of several volumes of poetry, including "The Road to Hallister," a book-length narrative in blank verse; and "Waters Over Linn Creek Town," a rhyming chronicle of the Lake of the Ozarks.

## Ralph Alan McCanse

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### two poems

#### IDYL

Across that pure harmonic sill,  
The twilight music of some rill,  
Strikes-in the old dry weather ill,  
Cicadas' cacophonic skill . . .

Loud in the dusk a whip-poor-will  
His lonely stave repeats, until  
The creek-frogs rouse for chorus drill,  
Jeering, complaining, deep or shrill . . .

A far-off dog raves at the kill . . .

A robin chirps through drowsy bill . . .

The creek-woods and the cedared hill  
Rustle with night air's rising; chill,  
The mists their curtaining task fulfill . . .

And now the scented night is still.



## PASTORALE

Show not, with city pride,  
Your costly timepiece here  
Where timid wild things hide,  
That measure time and tide  
Through hunger and through fear!

Cloud shadows come and go;  
They loom; they lag, then leap  
—Yet not too fast, too slow  
To keep true count below  
The skyline and the steep.

What dial for the sun  
Here, hour by tranquil hour,  
Except the cob-web spun  
Above the rabbit's run?  
Except the simple flower?

Why reckon it by wheel  
—Beauty by cog and gear?  
Why miss the earthy feel,  
The mystic soul appeal?  
*Bring not your proudness here!*

Mr. Tiffany is a film producer with the Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction, University Extension Division, the University of Wisconsin. The photographs on these pages are a few of his works on regional subjects.

## Jackson Tiffany

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### photographs



65

Birds (Photogram)

Mock Struggle

Beach Party



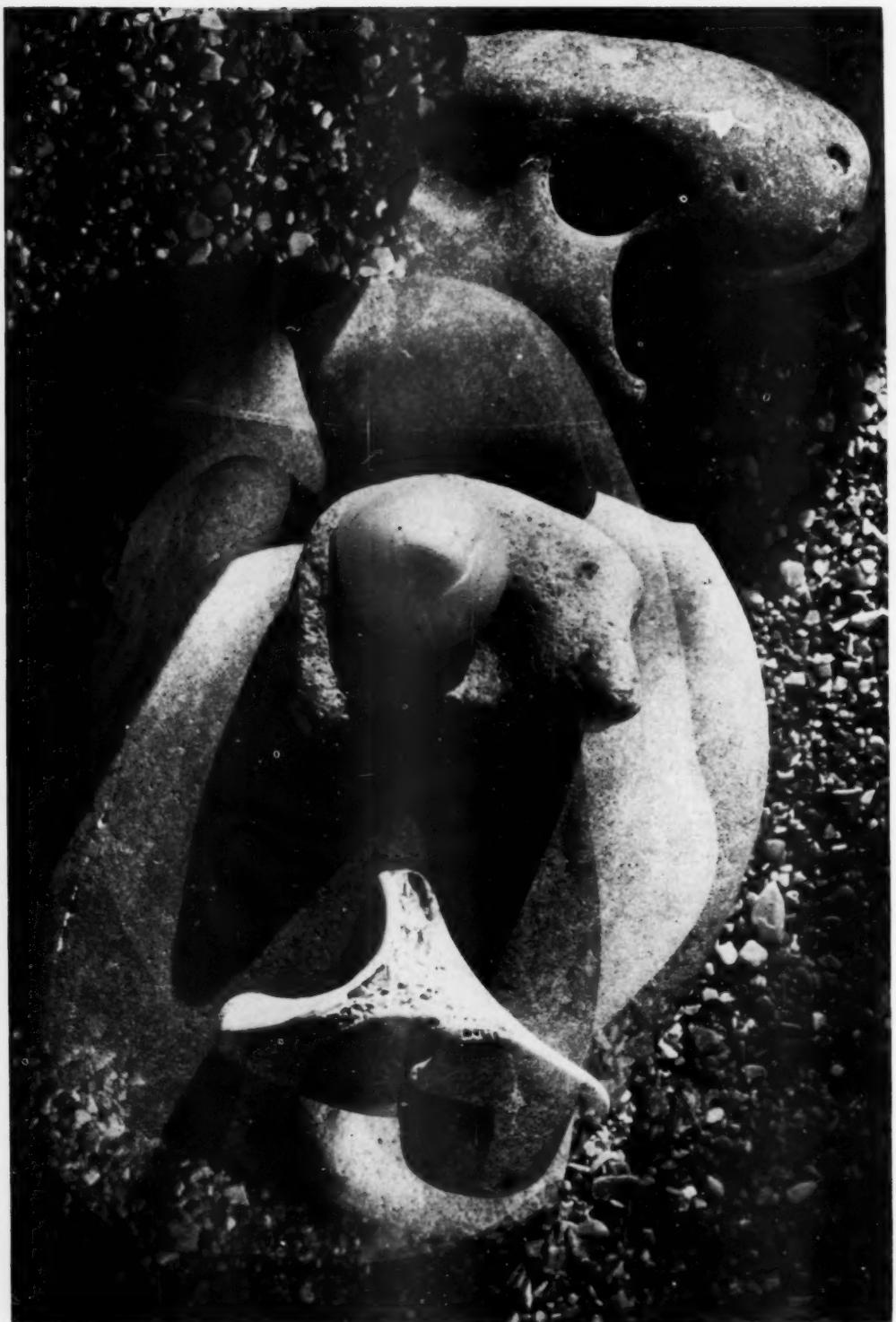






Urban Transition

Mrs. Brown



Stones and Bones at the Beach

Mr. Kaelin is assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, presently serving as associate editor of *Arts in Society*.

## E. F. Kaelin

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### the arts and communication

#### I

One of the definable roles of the aesthetician is to narrow the gap between artists and their society of appreciators. In our own time, when this gap seems to be at its maximum, a careful analysis of the process of communication is a shocking necessity. Too often we are prone to explain situations which are only remotely analogous by using identical models. That this has been the case between speech and artistic expression is obvious to only too few contemporary aestheticians. Croce's case is most significant: in his aesthetics, which he called a general theory of linguistics, a person who speaks is said to be forming a system of vocal gestures which convey all there is to be conveyed of his sensuous intuitions, or impressions. Indeed, the speaker's expression and his intuition are identical.<sup>1</sup> When this model is applied to the arts, however, there results an unhappy divorce between the inner activity of the spirit which organizes impressions, and the outer manipulation of materials which puts before an appreciative audience a mere artifact, or symbol of this inner activity. Thus an artwork is said to be an expression of the mind, and not executed, through techniques, in the materials of the artist's craft. What one perceives in looking at the physical execution of the artwork is, therefore, a symbol of a symbol.

Croce's problem is much more complicated than such a simplified presentation appears to admit; reflective artists do admit a distinction between their craftsmanship or technique, which may be successfully taught because it is formulable in idea and communicable in essence, and their inspiration, which is unique and therefore indefinable.

ble and incomunicable outside the individual work of art; and to this distinction his theory gives at least a specious explanation, but not without commitment to some very dubious metaphysics. Any theory which could explain both the communication of the artist with his audience and the distinction between technique and inspiration without the metaphysical trappings of idealism deserves closer attention. In section I of this paper we shall consider the outlines of such a theory.

We limit our present attention to a discussion of the inadequacy of the idealist's model for explaining communication. If the intuition of the artist is the artwork, then, supposedly, the making of a solid object is only an afterthought, an inessential and often unsuccessful attempt to communicate to some audience the artist's vision (intuition, idea). The fallacy of such a view is readily apparent. The critic has before him only the afterthought, which for any number of reasons may be as different from the original generating thought as paint on canvas, a physical object, differs from an idea, defined by Croce as spiritual activity. Can the critic, under such an assumption, ever talk about the work of art? Whoever coined the phrase "intentional fallacy" has shown that reputable critics, at least, cannot. A critic must judge the physical object before him. And so must the artist, presumably when he signs his work. Can we assume that critic and artist see the same object if they are looking at an idea? In an effort to answer this question, let us examine more closely the model of communication—significant discourse—used by Croce and his followers to explain the art process. When a person hears a word, he infers a meaning associated with that word for all persons capable of using the same language. If there is some doubt concerning the meaning of a particular vocable, both partners in the act can check their communication by referring to a standard dictionary of the language spoken. What could be more simple, and more inexact a model for artistic creation? The first suggestion which comes to mind is that the model breaks down for the lack of a dictionary to check artistic communication. This is true, and always has been; the realization of this truth, therefore, goes nowhere to explain the gap between contemporary artists and their audience. Moreover, if no one has yet constructed a list of emotions, or ideas and images, which

correspond with the line character, color harmony, and contrast, space tensions, and the like, the reason seems to be that such a task cannot be performed: the lexicographer of aesthetic meanings would be attempting the impossible; a dictionary can be composed for those words or symbols, and those alone, which already possess a fixed meaning in a given language. The artist, on the contrary, is dedicated to finding, or expressing, new meanings. Realizing that it is a fallacy to judge his own artistic merit on his feelings or intentions, he must assume the task of discovering a new idea by manipulating the materials of his medium. Experimentation is as necessary to the artist as it is to the scientist; for both, a dictionary can only follow discovery.

If the artist's gestures have meaning, they are of the same kind as the first words of the child who also discovers the meanings of his words after having learned to use them. The model for this kind of communication has already been suggested by G. H. Mead in his *Mind, Self and Society*. For Mead, the meaning of any gesture is a reaction to it, and when two individuals react to the same gesture in identical ways there has been communication.<sup>2</sup> Instead of Idea—Gesture—Idea, we have the following model: Gesture—Reaction<sub>1</sub>, Reaction<sub>2</sub>. The advantage of this model is that, in terms of artistic communication, there is no necessary distinction between the artist's "idea" and the work which allegedly serves as symbol of that idea. The artifact would be the artwork; it would be a sign, rather than a symbol. Where the meaning of a symbol is fixed by convention, that of a sign emerges from a social process of interacting organisms. Thus, the "meaning" of any given artwork is never exhausted by any one viewing of it: a classic becomes such by generations of appreciative responses to the artist's complex gesture. Analysis and informed discussion have never killed a work of art.

It is our purpose to show in the second part of this article that such a model has already been used by at least two recent aestheticians, and that, if carried out to its logical conclusions, it would tend to bring the artist back into contact with his audience without the unreasonable demand that he change his habits, however difficult to understand or censurable these habits might at present seem to be. Con-

temporary art has meaning, if only we understand that we, as audience, must collaborate with the artist for that meaning to emerge. The social process commonly called artistic activity is amenable to empirical investigation. Both creator and appreciator are implicated, being united by an objectively verifiable, aesthetically describable, work of art.

## II

Croce's basic insight, that art is in some sense a language, has been considerably obscured by recent British and American aestheticians because of an inability to agree on the nature of the function served by that language. Some, like I. A. Richards, subscribe to an emotive theory; while others, like Morris Weitz, espouse a cognitive theory, whereby the arts are said to give us knowledge of a specifiable sort. Richards was concerned primarily with the language of literature; and Weitz, with a general philosophy of the arts. We may sketch their antithetical views in an effort to show that the rhetoric of the one and the logic of the other demand a third discipline to complete the modern aesthetic trivium: there remains to be supplied the grammar of artistic forms, already so clearly outlined by two French aestheticians, Alain and Valéry.

For Richards, the language of poetry is emotive, because considered with reference to a set of verifying conditions, the statements of poetry would all be false. A poetic statement is therefore a pseudo-statement, whose acceptability is defined "entirely by its effect in releasing or organizing our impulses or attitudes (due regard being had for the better or worse organizations of these *inter se*)."<sup>13</sup> For Weitz, on the other hand, literary statements in general, although making no original claim to truth, are nonetheless capable of implying other statements which do make verifiable truth-claims. Thus, in analyzing the "meaning" of Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Weitz shows how the surface meaning of the story can be understood to "imply" a general truth; the life of a Negro as depicted in the novel illustrates the idea that when freedom of the individual is externally

restricted it becomes nothing more than the ability to destroy, first others and then oneself.<sup>4</sup> Weitz has borrowed D. H. Parker's distinction between surface and depth meanings, and presented them in the dress of modern logic. Sidney Zink has achieved the same result in terms of the more classical logic in his "The Cognitive Element in Art."<sup>5</sup>

Both Richards and Weitz are operating within the realm of empirical aesthetics; but neither of their descriptions seems to do justice to the aesthetic problem: neither Richards, the sensitive reader of poetry and intelligent theoretician, nor Weitz, the sensitive theoretician and intelligent reader of poetry, has found an adequate explanation for the human sensitivity and intelligence implicated in the complete art process. The inadequacy of both their positions is apparent from the inability to generalize the principle of the aesthetic language as each considers it. Forgetting the most part about the regard owing the organization of attitudes and impulses *inter se*, Richards could talk meaningfully only about poetry, or at most about the literary arts; Weitz has at least tried the generalization,<sup>6</sup> but his description of the truth-claims of painting and music, based upon the analogy of those implicit in the Christian's gesture of prayer, has failed to convince, most probably because the analogy with the prayerful attitude was only partially developed. After all, Richards might very well say that the prayerful attitude is one of those whose embodiment in ritual makes religion a true artistic activity. One activity, two points of view. Need we pay our money and take our choice?

Not necessarily. It is obvious that art can and does embody the emotional states of the artist, likewise that an audience may be emotionally moved by the contemplation of such an embodiment, and it is just as obvious that at least some forms of art contain depth meanings, or, if you like, second order assertions. But nothing is to be gained by belaboring the obvious. A solution to this dilemma can be had only by reconsidering the notion of meaning as it applies to art-forms—all of them, to each in its purity.

The first step in this positive portion of our analysis is, therefore,

to elucidate this notion of the pure art form. History will come to our aid: in France the twenties were roaring with still another literary debate; *viz.*, whether the office of poetry was to express a mood, idea or anything else, or whether poetry was a musical form, to be judged as an aesthetic act merely in reference to such a form. If poetry were meant to express anything, in the sense of referring to an idea or emotion of the poet, then the creation of the artist would not be unlike the creation of God who entertained ideas, or exemplars of the things to be created. This is the cognitivist position, and easily lends itself to an idealistic interpretation, such as Croce's. But if the creation is purely mental, then the outward manipulation of the materials which constitute the physical work of art is merely secondary, technique as opposed to inspiration, and the ideal work of art would be of sights unseen and sounds unheard. Fortunately or unfortunately, museum habitués are more interested in the sights that are seen and concert-goers in the sounds that are heard—even if these sights and sounds are becoming more and more difficult to "understand." Those creations which can be appreciated are of the body, a gesture of the body itself: a movement of the arms or legs in a dance; of the vocal chords in song; of the hand holding brush, tube of paint, pencil, or burin; of the fingers plucking a string, stroking a key of clavier, piano, or typewriter. The idea, the feeling, cannot exist outside the physical object which results. This is what Professor Charles Morris meant when he said that an aesthetic sign refers, if refer it must, only to itself.<sup>7</sup> When poetry is judged with reference to the potentialities of its particular medium, it is judged in its purity. Only a study of the possibilities of the medium in question will enable us to judge the mechanics of the aesthetic language operating through that medium. We shall continue the analysis of the poetic medium.

The French aestheticians who have been most articulate on this subject are Paul Valéry (1871–1945) and Emile Chartier (pseud., Alain, 1868–1951). From their point of view, a poem, the physical object created by the poetic artist, is composed of words, neither of emotions nor of ideas; and the value of the poem is to be found in the words, not in the emotion or the idea which the words may contain. But prose too is composed of words, yet is not for that reason poetry.

The consolation of Molière's *bourgeois gentilhomme*, who spoke prose naturally and poetry with difficulty, was not that his words were a kind of poetry albeit inferior in aesthetic quality, but that he had been speaking in an art form almost since birth. Valéry suggested that a valid distinction between poetry and prose could be drawn by considering each in its purity; i.e., by eliminating from poetry all that is prose (or any other type of expression, as painting, music, etc.) and to accept the residue as "pure poetry." When this process of eliminating the accidental characteristics of the genre was accomplished (as Clive Bell eliminated the representative function even of his favorite, Giotto, to arrive at the significant form of pure painting), there remains only the form of the poetic words. Pure poetry was thus described as a form, a system of vocal gestures whose value lies in their temporal sequence, in their relations one to the other which define their "weight" (*pesanteur*), number, sonority.

Marcel Proust has one of his characters praise the following line of Racine as the epitome of poetic expression, signifying, as it does, nothing at all: *Le fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé*.<sup>5</sup> One thing is clear; conventional meanings associated with words oftentimes hinder true poetic expression, and no idea is poetry if not expressed in some words. "The daughter of Minos and Pasiphae," for example, serves heavily to organize the drama of *Phèdre*: her parentage is foreboding of the evil in her future. But the drama is a complex medium, served here by poetic expression. What of the poetry? In translating only the referential idea of the line, which is irrelevant to the artistic, technical value of the poetry as such, we do not violate the prose-poetry distinction. Pure poetry can be neither translated nor paraphrased; any attempt to do either destroys its "purity." The value of the quoted line comes from its weight: the initial "i" is lengthened by the "ll," and the purity of the vowel sound is maintained first of all by the mute quality of the "e" in "fille," repeated in the "de," and secondly by its repetition in the first syllable of "Minos." The stress of the second syllable of this word announces the pause of the caesura, the sixth syllable of the classical French alexandrine. Following the caesura, there is a break in the original continuity, a brief staccato between the "et" and the "de" (the accented "e" being separated from the unaccented by the two consonants) whichulti-

mately flow on into a blending of the labial consonants (p, ph) with the assonance of the vowels (a, a), this final legato being reinforced by the stress of the terminating accented syllable. Technical jargon? Not at all: the technique of the poet is the source of the value in his art. All that the technical critic can do is to describe what is perceived in the object. Poets like Valéry are self-conscious craftsmen, truly aware of the possibilities of their medium, and hence doubly valuable to aestheticians. Henry James, another self-conscious artisan, wrote with similar illumination on the craft of fiction.<sup>9</sup> Craftsmanship endows materials with aesthetic form.

An alternative way of talking about the arts is exemplified in the ordinary language of Louis Armstrong, who in response to the question, "What is jazz," is supposed to have said: "Man, if I haf ta tell ya, yull neva know." And it is not to be supposed here that Satchmo himself didn't know. Apropos of his poetry, Valéry said something similar:

My verse has the meaning that one lends to it. The one I give it is valid only for me, and cannot be opposed to anyone else's. It is an error contrary to the nature of poetry, and one which would be fatal to it, to pretend that for every poem there is a true meaning, unique and conforming or identical to some thought of the author.<sup>10</sup>

The poem, one in form, is multiple in "meaning." Alain was to use this insight to construct a complete aesthetic theory. If the arts can truly be said to compose a language, then one ought to be able to describe that language, both generically and specifically. In the latter case, art objects, i.e., the formed material of the different genres, constitute expressive vehicles. Since Alain's *Système des Beaux-Arts* is almost wholly occupied with the specific arts (and a primary source is more valuable than a commentary), we shall consider artistic expression only in its generic sense. To describe how art is a language, we must describe *how* art objects express *what* they do.

First, the "what." If it can be taken as axiomatic that the creative act of the artist is a bodily act, that reference to an external idea (or emotion) of the artist can never be adequate, since an art object is obviously neither a feeling nor an idea, but an art-fact, an object con-

structed or reconstructed by the attitudes of the artist, then artistic expression is of nothing, if not of itself. The idea of the art-work is not external to the work: it is the work; the idea is given shape as the matter of the work is formed by the artist. To use a metaphor, taken from the early semiotic work of Professor Charles Morris, syntax, and not semantics, gives its rule to art. Syntactically, one brush stroke leads to another; one tone calls for development and final resolution; one word seeks its complement. The relations of aesthetic signs are all internal. This is the truth of artistic semiotic, and an adequate explanation of the art-work's unity. Depth meanings or emotional fulfillment there may be; but whether or not, they are, in themselves, irrelevant to a description of the purely artistic value. Reading for depth meanings, or for sense titillation, however sublimated, is low-grade appreciation, if such readings lead the attention away from the form of the object itself. The person who looks on one of Cézanne's still-life representations and sees an apple has been misled from the object of contemplation. Likewise, the reader of Wright's *Native Son* aware of a truth-claim. A novel, when it is a good one, claims only one thing: the attention of an appreciative audience, and this to itself.

The error of the semantic view is apparent when we consider the "how" of artistic expression. Since art is considered to be a language by both emotivist and cognitivist, its signs are mistaken for conventional symbols having a meaning external to them. By means of such symbols the artist is alleged to communicate his ideas or feelings. In his social psychological study of language, G. H. Mead called such an attitude "the error of the philologist." One could not look to the mind of the speaker for the idea to be expressed, because in the first instance of communication there was no mind prior to the symbol. Language, for Mead, was the social phenomenon which conditioned the appearance of mind, and its study therefore was more properly genetic. Alain perceived this same error of "philology" in aesthetics, as well as the advantages of the genetic method:

The first meaning of a sign, make note of it, is the effect that it produces on others. The child is acquainted first of all with the human text by purely mechanical memory, and then he deciphers the meaning on the face of his fellow-man. A sign is explained by the other. And the other,

in his turn, receives his own sign reflected by a human face: each learns, then, from the other; and this is a beautiful friendship.<sup>11</sup>

Meaning and society, like craftsmanship and form, are inseparable concepts. The meaning of an artwork grows out of social interaction: in the clearest exemplification of the idea, the gestures of one dancer harmonize with those of another. The dance is a conversation of gestures signifying nothing for all the sound and fury.

As for Richards, reactions of an audience may be purely emotional: this is one way to appreciate art-works; and it may be the conception of an idea which is only implicit in the work, as in Professor Weitz' appreciation. But whatever they are, they may both be said to constitute a third dimension of artistic semiotic, one which may very well be entitled "pragmatic," to continue our metaphor in Professor Morris' terminology (semantics, syntaxes, pragmatics).<sup>12</sup> For an understanding of this third dimension, Peirce's semiotic theory is perhaps clearer: the meaning of the art-sign is rightfully its interpretant, the reaction of some subject to the gesture of the artist. Real master-works are those to which perhaps only their creators responded in the first instance, but whose individuality as expressive works of art has grown through time. Their basic formal unity is viewed and reviewed, and the interpretations given to it constitute the multiplicity of meaning aesthetic relativists insist upon in describing art objects.

Such is the account given by Alain to the meaning of works of art. An adequate semiotic interpretation of artworks will not stress the semantic dimension, as Weitz seems to have done; nor the pragmatic, as Richards most certainly has done. If Alain is guilty of having stressed the syntactic dimension, the reason is that it seems to be a necessary condition for the existence of the other two. To summarize Alain's position, we may say that he divided languages, as did Auguste Comte, into two kinds: those signifying absolutely and those signifying relatively. The absolute language is composed of gestures which, semantically considered, are primitive signs referring only to themselves and whose meaning therefore accrues in a social process of interpretation. Art-works are said to be such signs; and

if this contention is acceptable, it can be seen that meaning in art is a social phenomenon taking place between the artist and his society by means of the created work. From the nature of the sign described it is apparent that the artist learns as much from his work as does his audience. The artist is his first appreciator. In a word of Alain, the artist is the first one surprised to discover "his" idea.

The signs of the relative language, on the other hand, are arbitrary symbols. The scientific and algebraic languages exemplify the ideal of communication made possible by such signs. Any ordinary language will afford another example. But in judging the works of prose artists, the semantical meanings of the words used may be considered in the same light as representation in painting. In other words, the relative language may become an element of the absolute: since words will always have a representational content, the form of a novel or short story will always be a concrete whole. What is said, having no particular aesthetic value in itself, will become aesthetic as it is given expression or concretion within the author's total gesture, or style.

It is apparent now where the ambiguity in the conception of the literary media lies. According to Alain and Valéry, words are the materials of both prose and poetry: words as sonorous entities in the case of poetry, and as embodying a semantic reference in the case of prose. But in neither case do the referents of the words constitute the aesthetic meaning of the work of art. In both cases our aesthetic reaction is to the purely formal character of the work considered only with reference to itself, to its own internal structure. The question of the meaning of art-works has heretofore been settled by reference to a property of the medium with which poets and novelists (or essayists and philosophers) must work. How easy to understand then why more careful aestheticians<sup>13</sup> have maintained that knowledge can result from only some kinds of art-works, and why the less careful have had difficulty in showing that knowledge may be garnered from all art media! There has been, in terms of classical logic, a mistaking of an accidental for an essential property of the genus of art-facts. The essential property of this genus is the forming activity of the artist; but let this not mean Crocean intui-

tion: Croce, no less than Hegel, needs turning right side up. Creation is the act of the human body, a gesture which has meaning through the interpretive response of an appreciative audience.

In conclusion, it might be said that recent French aesthetics gives a fruitful suggestion for adjudicating the issue between the conflicting claims of the emotive and cognitive theorists. Whatever one thinks of the distinction drawn by the Frenchmen between prose and poetry, it is clear that the accidental property of the prose medium cannot be generalized successfully to apply to all other media. There may even be some question as to whether such generalization is possible for any one given property. Our thesis is simply that the work of Alain and Valéry offers a new avenue of approach toward the analysis of art objects considered as expressive vehicles. The theory is one having a great deal of consistency with the practice of contemporary artists, who tend more and more to abstract from subject matter in their attempt to exploit the expressiveness of their respective media. In modernist art, we are presented with the creative act itself, as it is made possible by given materials. This is what Alain saw so clearly:

The human body, by its structure, offers us two forms of the natural language: the gesture and the voice. One sees immediately that the dance corresponds to the first, and music to the second. However, if one wishes to understand in what sense art is language, one must consider language at its sources. And it is clear that the first and most powerful language is action. To act is to signify.<sup>14</sup>

What the artist thinks is never so important as what he does. Linguistics may reach fruition as aesthetic theory if aestheticians continue their research into the arts as actually practiced by the artists of their own time. Since "modern" art is our art, it should become the object of interest to our aestheticians. The modern artist's interest in form calls for reinforcement by aesthetic analyses of form, whether abstract or concrete; and, if such reinforcement is given, aestheticians may be able to fulfill their function of bringing together artists and their audience. In order to achieve this level of communication, emotivists and cognitivists must be supplemented by formalists. In painting this has already been done in the criti-

cism of Bell and Fry; recently, in literature, the not so new school of New Criticism has taken a step in the right direction; and music affords almost a model of abstract formal analysis.

Implications of the formalist theory are great at present, for both artist and society. In general, if our attitudes before works of art become more aesthetic in the sense defined above, we should no longer hear from members of society: "What's the message? That doesn't resemble anything! I don't like it. Let's censor it." Nor should we hear from the artist: "I work for myself; the people are too insensitive to judge." The artist and his audience discover the artistic idea in the same way, by observing what has been done. Aestheticians have only to enter into the conversation. They have only to re-learn their language as a child does—from day to day. In the absence of this learning process, we can only wait for the evaluation of the future. It is not unfitting to presume that, in the ages which are to follow, anthropologists will look upon the art of our time and see, in Ortega y Gasset's phrase, a will to style. "Theirs," they will say, "was a dehumanized art; we can see in it only a complex gesture, a form which seems to express nothing, *i.e.*, everything, or whatever you like. And if you insist that we tell you what it is, you will never know."

#### Notes

**N.B.:** Each reference may be checked against the bibliography according to the identifying numbers given below.

#### I

- (1) 2. pp. 8-9.
- (2) 5, in particular, Part II, "Mind," *passim*.

#### II

- (3) 7, reprinted in Vivas and Kreiger, *The Problems of Aesthetics* (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1953), p. 585.

(4) 10, pp. 137 ff.

(5) 11.

(6) *Op. cit.*, pp. 134-52.

(7) Cf. 6.1.

(8) Jean Racine, *Phèdre*, I, 1.

(9) Cf. 3.

(10) "Préface à un Commentaire," *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, 34: 216-21, February 1930. Reprinted in 8. Translation mine.

(11) 1.2, p. 104. Translation mine.

(12) Cf. 6. Although this early monograph has been superseded by much of Professor Morris' later work, the fitness of the metaphor I have used to explain the various dimensions of meaning in the artwork seems patent. It was first suggested to me by Professor C. Arthur Berndtson in a lecture on aesthetics at the University of Missouri; in recent times, it has been used by Jarrett (cf. 4, pp. 202 ff.) for similar purposes.

(13) Cf. 11.

(14) 1.1, p. 60. Translation mine.

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## Lewis Turco

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### two poems

#### A PIPER'S TUNE

The old grey piper spurs his song  
Along the ridge I used to walk.  
From his lapel, a spiral clock  
Dangles time to what is sung.

Wheezing rhythms from a lung  
Dry as last September's chalk,  
The old grey piper spurs his song  
Along the ridge I used to walk.

Fall nods token of the wrong  
Winter does to those who stalk  
August's greenly preening cock:  
And on that ridge I prowled along,  
The old grey piper spurs his song.

### **QUARTET**

Yesterday O, yesterday,

The old man muttered.  
On the mantle his timepiece stuttered.

Today, still today,

The midwife groaned.  
Beneath her fingers the young wife moaned.

Tomorrow, ah tomorrow,

The student sighed.  
In the glass his features lied.

Forever and forever,

Whispered the rain  
And ground the mountain down a grain.

Mr. Feldman presents an argument for reuniting the activities of artists and creators, the makers of culture, with the derived activity of historians, critics, *et. al.*, their interpreters, into a new synthesis of general culture from which standpoint the problem of freedom of expression within the constraints of society may be reformulated and perhaps, settled with justice for all. He is associate professor of art in the department of painting, sculpture, and design at Carnegie Institute of Technology.

## Edmund Burke Feldman

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### on the necessity of fusing two views of culture

The dust jacket on T. S. Eliot's book, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, informs us that "the word *culture*, in recent years, has been widely and erroneously employed," and that Mr. Eliot helps define the word while also correcting misconceptions about culture itself. Since several keen minds have questioned Eliot's definition of "culture," there is no need to repeat the effort here. What might be useful, however, would be an examination of the way definitions of the word are derived and used. Thus, by avoiding the question of a definition's exactness and considering the methods used to define it, one may arrive at some more fruitful approach to the problem of meaning. The difficulty with definitions of "culture" is that they are on one hand too exclusive—endeavoring to sharpen the meaning by confining *culture* to the range of the author's prejudices—and on the other hand too inclusive—equating the meaning of the term with the whole of history or civilization. A simple definition, for example, may be found in Eliot who says culture and religion are practically identical, both aspects of the same 'thing,' whatever the 'thing' may be. This is an exclusive definition and has at least the virtue of precision. An inclusive definition could be found in Pitirim Sorokin's description of the socio-cultural world:

The totality of the "immaterial" meanings-values-norms, not objectified as yet through the material vehicles but known to humanity; the totality of already objectified meanings-values-norms with all their vehicles; finally, the totality of mindful individuals and groups—past and present; these inseparable totalities make up the total socio-cultural world, superimposed on mankind's physical and biological worlds.<sup>1</sup>

The first two parts of this definition are comprehensive enough to include anyone's idea of culture; not just *a culture*, a stage or part of culture, but the entire phenomenon. Once we accept a definition of this sort, we have something so extensive in space and time, and so rich in what it designates, that one feels a bit presumptuous in using the word in a sentence.

The cowardly evasion proposed here involves, instead of definitions, descriptions of characteristic definitions of "culture" as they emanate from disciplines or occupations dealing with the phenomenon. By this method we may find out how people learn the meaning of the word, and this discovery may be of something more important than an antecedent to any stated definition. Then the definitions, or classes of definitions, can be used as evidence of the way "culture" is understood.

## I

The major kinds of definition of our word might be classified according to the standpoint or location of the person who does the defining. Generally speaking, one kind of definition is made by standing outside of, and observing culture; a second kind is made while engaged within culture. Obviously, these distances and locations are imaginary: they represent the imaginative movement of the self toward or away from any phenomenon it is interested in. The movement to an external position is what the professional critic, historian, or anthropologist does instinctively when undertaking a study of culture or some aspect of it.

What is the general character of the definition of culture derived from an external relation to it? First, it has the quality which all distant observations seek to exhibit, namely objectivity. A people's needs, the origin of the needs, the tools and procedures for satisfying needs, these can be systematically observed and recorded. The anthropologist does this by travelling to a society other than his own, thereby achieving objectivity through physical distance. The customs and preferences of his own people are too overlaid with veils of emotion to permit the kind of external description which science prescribes. Anthropology, having emerged from a pseudo-scientific period of arm chair theorizing, now lays a premium upon field work. Before graduating to the stage where they can erect super-systems of human culture, anthropologists must serve an apprenticeship observing the clandestine habits of the Zuni or the Marquesas Islanders. That is probably why the adjective "rigorous" so often appears conjoined with the phrase "field investigation."

What the anthropologist tries to do through travel, the critic attempts to accomplish by imagination. Although a critic evaluates rather than describes, his evaluations will stand up longer if personal feelings and idiosyncrasies are imaginatively deposited at the door. There are times, of course, when both travel and imagination are unreliable: critics and social scientists can succumb to some personal motive which makes a larger claim than science. But, for the most part, opinions are not permitted to interfere with external descriptions, and if they succeed in intruding each is clearly labeled as such. The important point is that here the definer of culture is not engaged in making it. This is a truism, but a truism nevertheless which may help explain the inadequacy of such descriptions.

While the anthropologist's distance from culture is usually spatial, the historian's distance is temporal. What distinguishes an historian from an archivist or annalist is the obligation he feels to apply a selective principle to the materials offered by culture. This obligation to fit data into sequences, periods, or categories may cause the historian to think that culture is governed by the rhythm of his cate-

gories. George Boas has written an interesting essay on historical periods (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, March, 1953) in which he demonstrates how students of cultural history explain works of art in terms of the spirit of a period, while the spirit of the period is in turn derived from common qualities found in works of art or other cultural documents. He says:

If one can find modal patterns, styles, ideas, and the like in any chronological period, it is useful to discover them. The trouble arises when after their discovery they are erected into an explanatory principle and used to interpret what was actually written or intended to have been written.<sup>2</sup>

This tendency is most useful for historical writing which describes culture as some phase of *becoming*. Becoming what? Becoming itself, "itself" having already been named as the next category or period. The notion that culture is a perpetual becoming is an occupational hazard of historians, for which they can thank Hegel.

Since history can define culture only as some phase of a larger process, it can describe confidently only particular events and chains of causation. But when history attempts to talk about the whole of culture, it is really talking about a direction in time. The event the historian chooses to include in his narrative is chosen because it contributes to an already known culmination, a culmination in the present. Good historiography inevitably has this dramatic structure, and when it does not, it is merely record-keeping. Consequently, historical characterizations of an epoch are likely to be a summary of selected items on the journey to the present. As V. Gordon Childe says of an historical science, archaeology, it is "liable to become the study of cultures rather than of culture!"<sup>3</sup> Hence, the historical descriptions of culture are always proximate and fragmentary, although based upon the widest possible scan of evidence. The concern of historians with movement toward eventual destinations makes them expert at describing the process of arriving, but unable to speak with authority about the conclusion of the journey.

Intellectuals and critics comprise another group of distant observers of culture. The two can be classified together since intellectuals are

really critics-at-large, differing from the genuine article only in verbal skills and compensation. Both share with archaeologists the practice of examining cultural traces after they have been left. They hoist themselves outside the context of artistic production or creative living in order to function at a distance. Their distance is occasionally tinged with resentment because, unlike other élites, they are not accorded any generous portion of honor.

A critic is a sensorium with a memory. To carry out his role he invokes recollections of absent artifacts and works of art, and tries deftly to conceal the fact that he uses them as standards of value for present judging. If he tries to view each new work, each cultural instance afresh, his critique becomes an historical report of stimuli upon his reactors. To avoid this dead end of impressionistic criticism, he applies a critical apparatus, which consists in focusing the history of art upon a point (the instance under scrutiny) and making relevant comparisons. A definition of culture derived from art criticism, therefore, consists of sometimes more, sometimes less accurate triangulations of points within the culture. For the most part, the location (read "worth") of these points is determined with respect to bearings taken from adjacent points in the culture. Occasionally, a bearing is taken on a point in another culture; the result can broaden critical perspective so much that the entire set of triangulations is ruined.

The distance of intellectuals from culture is known generally as alienation, rather than perspective. While intellectuals in American society do not comprise a cohesive class as in European society, they do constitute an estranged group when behaving distinctively as intellectuals. This alienation or estrangement inevitably conditions the intellectual's definition of "culture": he is profoundly aware of elements hostile to real culture and of the nonaristocratic or nonélite composition of these elements. The intellectual, because he is declassed, is pre-eminently the possessor of what might be called a *we/they* consciousness, and is prone to ascribe all forms of crudity and coercion to 'they.' His definition tends to deal mainly with those nonmuscular interests which are his own unique pleasures. He does not really believe that popular or technological phenomena have a

legitimate place in the making of culture; or, if he admits them, he does so with the qualification, *mass* culture. The fact that the achievements of mass culture reflect the idealism of another generation of intellectuals does not occur to him. He is concerned that his definition buttress his proneness to fantasy at great length and, if possible, be a means of retaliating against Philistia.

Apparently, the definition of "culture" reflects (1) the way the author learned its meaning, or (2) the way he would like to have learned its meaning. When Eliot attempts to define culture as identical with religion, he is defining it as he wishes it were. Religion obviously is not identical with culture in modern secular society. But it *was* identical in medieval society, and thus we can understand the definition as a wish that modern society were medieval. This is a perfectly respectable desire that Eliot shares with Miniver Cheevy and a number of French Catholics who, as Berdyaev remarks, "took refuge in the Middle Ages, that remote spiritual fatherland, which seemed to offer the only escape from the mortal *ennui* of triumphant civilization."<sup>4</sup> Berdyaev is here using "civilization" in the Spenglerian sense, as the death of culture. This helps us to understand the strategy of Eliot's imagination: since culture today is either dead or spurious, it should be redefined in terms of what it ought to be, what 'T' wish it were. For an intellectual, to place the logical responsibility of defining culture at the service of wish-fulfillment is a kind of moral courage, perhaps revolutionary courage. Presumably, even a man of conservative instincts has revolutionary impulses, although they may be directed backward in history. And, as we would suspect, the conservative intellectual gives expression to these impulses by manipulating the meanings of words.

## II

We should not convey the impression of psychologizing professional and social groups, nor of denying the real knowledge their members have about the nature of culture. It may be useful, however, to show the inadequacies of their knowledge when it is based upon chronic displacement from the phenomenon being described. The professionals would be the first to admit that their knowledge is incom-

plete, and that it betrays the defects of their method. Even so, there are certain virtues common to the external method of defining culture. One such virtue lies in the presence of a moral quality; but while the moralists' terminology is not often used, it is usually implicit. The external description of culture, by virtue of its report of all consequences and options, shows how moral categories could have been applied: Thucydides, while not precisely a scientific historian, makes plain what the Athenians could have done, hence *should* have done, to save themselves. Despite the scrupulous objectivity and garish vocabulary of social scientists, it seems fairly obvious that they select their hypotheses, experiments, and some of their data on the basis of dimly perceived, perhaps unconsciously held, moral categories. Indeed, only the external observer of culture is equipped to apply moral judgments, since he alone has something approaching real knowledge of alternatives. The poor fish on the inside are the true 'relativists,' *i.e.*, really arbitrary, since they have no respectable knowledge of right and wrong, fair and unfair, even if they cherish the illusion that they have.

Another common feature of the external definition is its historical or prophetic quality. This suggests that the fruits of culture are the culminations of a number of antecedent events or causes, and may hence be anticipated and planned for, if not absolutely predicted. The proximity of historiography to prophecy results in the Spengler-Toynbee-Sorokin kind of effort—the pursuit of laws of recurrence in human culture, not without an occasional dash of free will. While violence is committed upon evidence in one way or another to produce these massive studies, their cumulative effect is aesthetic rather than scientific, and hence may appear quite attractive. Their popularity indeed is owing to the aesthetic-dramatic effect and not to their reliability as prophecy. Readers of these vast histories may feel compelled, by virtue of a flood of *einfühlung*, to act out the trends described so as not to disappoint the authors. Some readers of Goethe's *Werther* were moved to commit suicide. This is the kind of courtesy one would expect from the aesthetically sensitive Japanese. Others may remain relatively unmoved. Be that as it may, the historical definitions of "culture," whether as a series of cycles or modest linear effort, do succeed in focusing interest upon human

destiny, and call forth a response based upon the description of that destiny. Historiography thus becomes one of the components of history.

We may draw this conclusion about prophetic studies of culture from the outside: from within they are felt as efforts at control, and so they are resisted by assertions of freedom on the part of those actually working out culture from that vantage point.

Notice that the qualities of the external definition are not directly accessible from the inside, at least not in any organized or coherent form. The history of civilization bears out that the moral-historical sense is a relatively late development. Pre-history was, of course, lived entirely from the inside. Modern civilization, in pursuing the tendency to learn the meaning of culture more and more from the outside, has developed special forms like journalism and remote entertainment to process culture. These forms have the effect of extending to large numbers of people more or less distorted versions of the moral-historical definition. The directly mediated versions of history and morality in the past did not equip the mass of men to understand their times from the outside. Today when men have abundant opportunity to understand history from the outside, they systematically deceive and delude each other by exploiting the ambiguities in their communication forms.

### III

Turning to the definition of "culture" garnered from an internal point of view, we can see that it is made by the people who are observed by academics and dissected by critics. Disinterested observation ceases to be paramount. Metabolism, inherited technology, stimulus-response, procreation, these become central. From within, there is no awareness of building culture, but only of being confronted with demands and desires, and doing what one can to satisfy them. Ortega y Gasset has given us this internal meaning of culture in a characteristic image:

drown. The poor human being, feeling himself sinking into the abyss, moves his arms to keep afloat. This movement of the arms which is his reaction against his own destruction, is culture—a swimming stroke.<sup>5</sup>

The significance of culture is literally learned in the discharge of tension. This describes the situation not only in primitive cultures, but also among primitives in a sophisticated culture. Opposite the intellectuals and social scientists on the outside are the Philistines and savages on the inside. Here the individual does not refer to culture in terms of change because he has no historical vision. Dominated by inherited formulae, he does not set goals and indulges in little evaluation of his institutions, much less organized criticism of them. He doesn't have a very pronounced sense of imaginative movement, but merely one of the self toward the need-object. He has, however, a strong sense of the reality of execution, of expending energy, of using materials, of being exhausted. In other words, the individual engaged on the inside of culture is close to natural and physiological rhythms. He seeks not to understand them, but to respond to them.

From the inside, therefore, culture consists of fashioning a response, a response in two modes which can be called "I like" and "I make." These two modes give us our internal definition. The mode, "I like," is indistinguishable from "I want." That can be seen easily enough in the behavior of children. Among more sophisticated humans, the difference between "I like" and "I want" is only a matter of time. This mode provides the internal idea with its aesthetic element. We can see wrapped up in the primitive "I like" all the libidinal and erotic elements which enter into the modern awareness of aesthetic value, less mediated, to be sure, and more briefly sustained, but undoubtedly the parent of the varied drives and motives which bring modern man to prize art. Indeed, the vividness of what the sophisticate prizes as art derives much of its force from some early or hidden contact with the response, "I want."

The second mode of response, "I make," locates the meaning of culture in the relation between an individual and tangible materials which must be fashioned. The imperative that they be fashioned,

and the form they must take, converge upon the individual at once. Tradition dictates the form, life provides the occasion, and art embodies the response. Thus far we can agree with Croce and other Hegelians who describe the art act as essentially intuition of the Idea. What Hegel and Croce give us is the psychology of the primitive artist, the man on the inside; and there they are on sound ground, but in their insistence that this psychology applies to modern man—creative or not—they are mistaken. For one thing, modern man does not live his life entirely on the inside; his partly external position gives him the power to conceive of many forms for the Idea, witness his notion of a pluralistic society. The external or partly external man is not tradition bound, or tradition-directed, to use Riesman's terminology. He is capable of working out forms to suit himself, while adjusting their content as he goes along. This experimental attitude toward life's challenge is precisely what the man on the inside rarely has. It is precisely what the authoritarians will not permit him to have. But the possibility that the response "I make" will be in a form unknown to tradition, that in a moment of hesitation a new reply will be fashioned for some vital challenge, this possibility raises the hope that freedom can be asserted even from within. Man learns about freedom, about options and alternatives, by fashioning original replies. That is what poetry is, an original reply in the endless discourse between man and nature or man and society. And originality is learned through hesitation. To be free, therefore, men must learn to hesitate.

In addition to the possibility of originality, the "I make" also creates the possibility of the property relation. The very goods which express the significance of culture for those who make them also determine culture for other persons who own them. Making, however, is the primary response and owning is its reflection. Making relates to freedom and owning relates to power. It is quite obvious that in industrial culture, making is not an authentic response because the authority to respond by making is vested in an owning and managerial group. The opportunity to hesitate in the reply to life's challenge is diffused into a complex administrative machinery. The administrative mechanism, while not an organism itself, behaves like

one by assimilating to itself the qualities of personality which formerly belonged to its human integers.

Despite the problems which the "I make" creates when it is elaborated into property and power by an intricate civilization, it does serve, whether at its simple or complex level, to give one of our internal definitions. At one level it can mean freedom; at another, the reality of matter. At both levels it makes space particular. While it is an over-simplification to say that culture has a materialistic meaning from the inside, that transcendent considerations make no claim, it is correct to say that pleasure is taken in things, that a man is located by his attachment to things, whether they be weapons, the soil, domestic animals, relics, slaves, or a house in suburbia. Such is the man whom Isaiah condemns when he says: "Every one worshippeth the work of his own hands, That which his own fingers have made." (Isaiah 2:9,10) When the man on the inside discovers freedom, it is in connection with the ability to change not only the relations of things, but their very physical aspect.

#### IV

Culture viewed from within can be seen as possessing aesthetic and spatial qualities, while from the outside its moral and historical qualities dominate the scene. Both classes of definition are inadequate by themselves because each is fragmentary, but it is apparent that they complement each other and that in combination they can give the definition we seek. From the point of view of a metaphysics which endeavors to deal with reality according to space-time and moral-aesthetic categories, the definitions singly afford a truncated version of their object. The comprehensive definition of the word, therefore, calls for a vital, and not a merely logical synthesis of the qualities of both kinds of definition. In practical terms this demands a continuous change of imaginative position, a dynamic alternation from making to evaluating, from predicting to undergoing. It involves a fusing of observations about life with realistic engagement in life, "realistic" because imagination must be fortified by acts.

The outward evidence of this dynamic process or synthesis of mean-

ings is found in art. Every work of art embodies in practical form the consequences of internal and external encounters with culture. That is why the artistic imagination exhibits the ability to detach itself from and then to merge with the general flow of experience. We can say that the creative act recapitulates the history of the free imagination. And it is through an understanding of art, therefore, that men are afforded a means of organizing their knowledge about freedom in human culture and freedom in nature. Indeed, the structure of aesthetic experience may be the most efficient way of organizing men's energies for that purpose.

It is possible that the free behavior of the creative imagination anticipates what may become a more socially diffused kind of behavior. In *Art and Artist*, Otto Rank suggested that the modern psychological notion of the development of the self takes its pattern from the historical development of the artist-type. The artist could arrive at the conception of selfhood because his materials served as a self-image, a sort of mirror wherein he could see the progressive building up of an entity. He could extricate himself from the collective soul of the Middle Ages because he learned to discover and rediscover his own soul in his work. This discovery and rediscovery of self or soul is presumably what pschoanalysis endeavors to do, repeatedly separating strands of self which have become intertwined with parent, employer, friend, or lover. But the artistic liberation of the self, which long preceded Freud's theorizing, is so important that it deserves further comment here.

The distinctive artist-type emerged prominently, of course, during the Renaissance. His personality became important, first as embodied in his work, and later, as a remarkable phenomenon in itself. Bernard Berenson attributes the Italian worship of genius to the influence of ancient Roman literature which stressed the importance of great men in the enactment of great events. Burckhardt is of the opinion that despotism "fostered in the highest degree the individuality not only of the tyrant or Condottiere himself, but also of the men whom he protected or used as his tools."<sup>6</sup> For either or both of these reasons, the artist was freed from his internal position as a fashioneer of things. Understandably, "official" art was pervaded by a secular

spirit and permitted to become great. Secular art is free-floating; it is not bound by institutional authority except in some innocuous manner. The ostensibly hieratic works of art further a secular purpose, which is not ignored but encouraged. From being bound by the stylistic and iconographic conventions of medievalism, the creative personality begins to assert itself as autonomous. Thus Veronese used the subject matter of religious art for effects extraneous to the Church's purpose. In a painting of the Last Supper he saw fit to include figures of soldiers, animals, a jester, a dwarf, and some weapons, all anagogically irrelevant. When called before the Tribunal of the Holy Office, he defended the presence of these figures on the grounds that he needed them for ornament, to fill space, and because painters are accustomed to take the same liberties as poets and madmen. Melvin Lasky, who recounts the story,<sup>7</sup> maintains that under present conditions the artist or his reputation would be destroyed, while Veronese "got off" by making only minor changes in the painting. The incident testifies not only to the comparative freedom of the Renaissance and contemporary artist, but also to the insurgent role of aesthetic relevance.

The domination of traditional symbolic values by qualities of painters reached its apogee in Mannerism if we think of the penetration of artistic restraints begun in the thirteenth century. We witness a consolidation of the artist's position both socially and aesthetically, even while, or perhaps because, political and economic disruptions began to be felt in Italy. Quite understandably, Arnold Hauser can speak of Mannerism as "the first modern style."<sup>8</sup> From the confines of artisan status, from a monotonous engagement in re-creating the internal meanings of an authoritarian culture, the artistic imagination made its transition outward to its present external and alienated position. This journey of the creative imagination has found its parallel in the steady growth of personal and political freedom in western history. That is why Cassirer could define culture as "the process of man's progressive self-liberation." The present crisis for freedom of thought is a crisis only because large numbers of men have been able to transport themselves imaginatively to an external cultural position. Therefore, in seeking to defend intellectual free-

dom, we should look to its roots in creativity and the history of creativity. We should not lose sight of the fact that the general development and the artistic career have followed a common path toward autonomy.

In terms of this analysis, the growth of freedom has meant a better opportunity to learn the meaning of culture from the inside. There are reactions, of course; a great deal of external material in pseudo-historical and pseudo-anthropological forms has been spoon-fed to the masses, but they have thereby learned to detect the general form of external commentary. When cigarettes are sold on the basis of "scientific" recommendations, we witness not only a perversion of scientific method, but also an admission of the fact that some sort of "disinterested" testimonial must support even so casual a purchase as a cigarette. In propaganda we encounter the complete subordination of external commentary to often diabolical ends, but it is presumably counteracted by free, creative scholarship. Regrettably, we can never be certain that creative scholarship is available in sufficient quality and quantity, or, once available, that it will find an audience.

It is quite obvious that authoritarian states or authoritarian elements in liberal states have usually tried to limit general knowledge to matters of limited concern, in modern jargon, to "nonpolicy" material. That was surely the feudal-aristocratic formula. Today the formula can be seen in the form of the analogies used by manipulators of mass opinion. The demagogue and the unscrupulous journalist both introduce external observations by analogy to internal habits. Thus, they persistently invoke the irrational in order to prevent the popular imagination from seeing larger configurations. Currently, we are experiencing a new variant of the formula: the distinction between "policy" and "nonpolicy" materials has been obliterated for the purpose of demonstrating how all meanings are ultimately related to, and involved in, one large configuration, such as the single classless society preached by communism. This practice is not unlike the medieval scholastic method of interpreting a great diversity of meanings in terms of Christian eschatology. The scholastics, however, were engaged in justifying an existent social order; their modern, authori-

tarian counterparts apparently have no such rational or stabilizing purpose; that is, they have no strategy, but seem to take a curious and perhaps uniquely modern pleasure in employing tactics.

Plainly, an understanding of culture from without represents political power; in the hands or minds of an élite, it is a weapon. Even in its imperfect or over-simplified forms, external understanding and commentary afforded means of controlling those who could not or were prevented from getting to the outside. Class structure was an instrument for implementing that control, varying as it did the degree to which designated groups could alienate themselves from dead center. Institutional change could be managed rationally from the outside; from within, institutions could only be changed by revolution. The paucity of external meanings available to groups submerged on the inside accounts for their periodic resort to violence and the brutal character of their modes of retaliation and revenge. This idea, incidentally, helps us to understand the rhetoric of brutality as used by Stalinist diplomacy: it is an instrument for identifying policy with the irrational aspirations of individuals and groups on the inside. Indeed, the truculence of Marx's prose may have been for this reason the most attractive feature to the Stalinist mentality of his entire doctrine.

The singular group which effectively escaped imprisonment on the inside, neither through reason nor through violence, was, as we have said, a portion of the artisan class. We cannot emphasize too strongly that this was an achievement of the imagination, beginning with stylistic freedom and culminating in personal freedom. Almost every notable artistic biography before the French Revolution recapitulates this theme. But, the artist always retained his connection with internal culture; he remained at one level at least a face painter, a decorator, an image maker, a story teller, a player. His new knowledge of external meanings fertilized and was fertilized by the internal materials of his craft. Hauser says<sup>9</sup> that after fees grew great and his social position was consolidated the Renaissance artist was not obliged to bother with the execution of odd jobs like coats of arms and the design of flags; and through his connection with humanists he became an intellectual worker. Our observations of these changes

in status should nevertheless not obscure the fact that the artist was still an internal resident; he continued to deal with primary sensations, he manipulated tangible materials, he worked with his hands. He never became, in Simone Weil's term, an "uprooted" intellectual. No longer an artisan, but an artist, he continued to go through the motions of the artisan on the inside.

## V

Imaginative mobility has been stressed as an instrument of emancipation because that same mobility is the necessary condition for freedom which modern freedom itself may destroy. Among the options available to modern men is the option to forego options. This is a choice which is not explicit, but which is implicit in the failure to exercise choice. Because of the historical success, at least in principle, of democratic ideals, large numbers of persons have been enabled to view culture from without. This is one of the essentials of modern freedom, but it tends to be interpreted as the right to observe and to comment upon culture from the outside without participating in the creative relations of culture from within. The dynamic processes of alternation, of choosing and undergoing, are abandoned for static roles now that democratic forms have been set up. Furthermore, the somewhat painful personal responsibilities of creative choice and evaluation have been transferred to experts and specialists. Freedom has thus become for many of us only a vicarious experience.

The evolution of the commentator as a sort of official critic of reality, and of the sleuth or spy as connoisseur of truth, has raised the possibility that historiography will be taken over by journalists and informers. This can be observed as the scrupulous techniques used by trained historians are suborned to the needs of feature writing, political careerism, and journalistic entertainment. If the account of history is corrupted at its source, it is only a matter of time before the stuff of history itself becomes a malleable material. Culture then becomes a confection served to the credulous by the unscrupulous. Control of historical meanings, as they are understood from without, allied with the manipulation of things, of property, from within would represent, in terms of our analysis, the possession of all the

meanings of culture. Then we should confront the complete weapon of modern civilization, the goal of power in its fullest elaboration, and there would result for the mass of men an indescribable darkness and confinement.

While it is simple enough to identify the personalities and institutions which figure in the process described above, it is less simple to identify the failures and defections which bring it about. For it is through the default of responsible élites, as Mannheim would say, that cultural control is vested in a power élite. As we have already observed, modern freedom is an achievement of the flexible, dynamic imagination. Every generation produces its quota of men who know how to exploit the cultural factors of their epoch for the sake of fewer restraints upon their own activities. (Malinowski says that freedom is usually described negatively in terms of fewer restraints.) What they achieve for themselves, however, is seized for or extended to the rest of men. In the fourteenth century such diverse factors as rising mercantilism, the desire of princes to patronize genius, and the impact of empirical methods upon ancient conceptions, were exploited by artists for their own purposes. These factors became the materials, the opportunities, and finally the conditions of advance for the creative imagination. In short, when artists and intellectuals are dynamic, we have a renascence, a golden age, a flourishing. When they are not, there is a steady constriction of freedom, a chipping away at even orthodox privileges, a crystallization of class and professional distinctions so that reciprocal movement and exchange of information become exceedingly difficult.

It is surprising that these developments are not recognized for what they are: symptoms of a creative default. It is more surprising when artists and intellectuals organize to deal with the symptoms rather than their cause. As the learned and creative classes expend their energies in rites of purification before the assaults of primitives, as they give vent to involved expressions of *mea culpa*, their capacities for original, excellent achievement are slowly diminished. A certain number of artists place their skills at the disposal of their organized critics. This is not so much an illustration of "the failure of nerve," as a devious avowal of the difficulty of the creative task. The whole

imaginative enterprise is abandoned for the comfort of a number of curious retreats.

We cannot hope, by eulogizing the creative imagination and by denouncing its opposites, to preserve the things we prize. The better to preserve our ideals, we can describe the setting in which freedom and imagination operate. Then, through the use of an extended image, the whole movement of imagination through culture can be indicated and seen afresh. The dangers of managed meanings can be pointed out; the options and obligations of the creative community can be pointed up. The survival of free culture is our reward.

#### Notes

- (1) Pitirim Sorokin, *Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis*, 1951, page 189.
- (2) George Boas, "Historical Periods," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, March, 1953, page 249.
- (3) V. Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History*, 1942, page 19.
- (4) Nicolas Beryaev, *The Meaning of History*, 1936, page 208.
- (5) Jose Ortega y Gasset, "In Search of Goethe from Within," *Partisan Review*, December, 1949, page 1165.
- (6) Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 1860, page 82.
- (7) Melvin Lasky, "The Happy Time of Gottschalk and Veronese," *Partisan Review*, September-October, 1952, page 605.
- (8) Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, Vol. I, 1951, page 356.
- (9) Hauser, *op. cit.*, pages 314-327.

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## Frederick Logan

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### notice of conference on art education

In the spring of 1959 (April 29 to May 2), a national conference on art education will meet at the University of Wisconsin.

This will be the seventeenth annual meeting for the National Committee on Art Education, a group sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Victor D'Amico is educational director of the Museum and chairman of the national committee.

The committee was founded in 1942 at a time when many of the valuable goals for the education in art seemed unlikely to be attained. Since its founding, the committee in its annual conferences and through the work of its members and its governing body, the Council, has consistently sought to understand and to deal with the major problems facing the improvement and expansion of art education.

Committee interests include the teaching of art in every level of education, from the nursery to the graduate school and adult education.

It has always been a particular concern of the committee to unite the efforts of teachers of art, artists, designers of all sorts, and museum workers to improve the quality of art teaching.

For many years all conferences were held at the Museum in New York City, but in 1956 it was decided that at least alternate meetings would be held on university campuses. The first such meeting moved westward to Pennsylvania State University, and in 1957 the conference moved to the University of Michigan. The 1958 meetings were scheduled for New York and were held there under difficulties because of the fire which destroyed valuable paintings and closed the Museum for some months. The last New York meeting was devoted to the discussion of *The Art in Art Education*.

The 1959 meetings in Madison will continue an examination of the same theme. This discussion topic is especially appropriate after too many years during which many of the humanities have sought excuses for their existence in the peripheral rather than the affirmative central values of their unique disciplines.

The Department of Art and Art Education, of which Prof. Warrington W. Colescott is chairman, will be the University sponsor of the event. The Wisconsin Art Education Association well be co-sponsor in the state. Clifford Kosy, of the Sheboygan Public Schools, is president. Prof. Frederick Logan is a member of the national council and will head the departmental committee working with the council.

Most of the meetings will be held at the Wisconsin Center. Large public meetings will be scheduled for the Wisconsin Union Theater and Great Hall in the Wisconsin Memorial Union. Detailed programs of the conference will be available after March 1, 1959. About 500 people are expected to attend.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bernard James, Editor of Issue No. 1, has since assumed a position as Director of the Center for Programs in Government Administration at the University of Chicago.

